FROM THE CREATOR OF *DEADMAN WONDERLAND*

LIVINGSTONE

STORY BY
TOMOHIRO MAEKAWA

ART BY
JINSEI KATAOKA

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LIVINGSTONE

Story:
Tomohiro Maekawa

Manga:
Jinsei Kataoka

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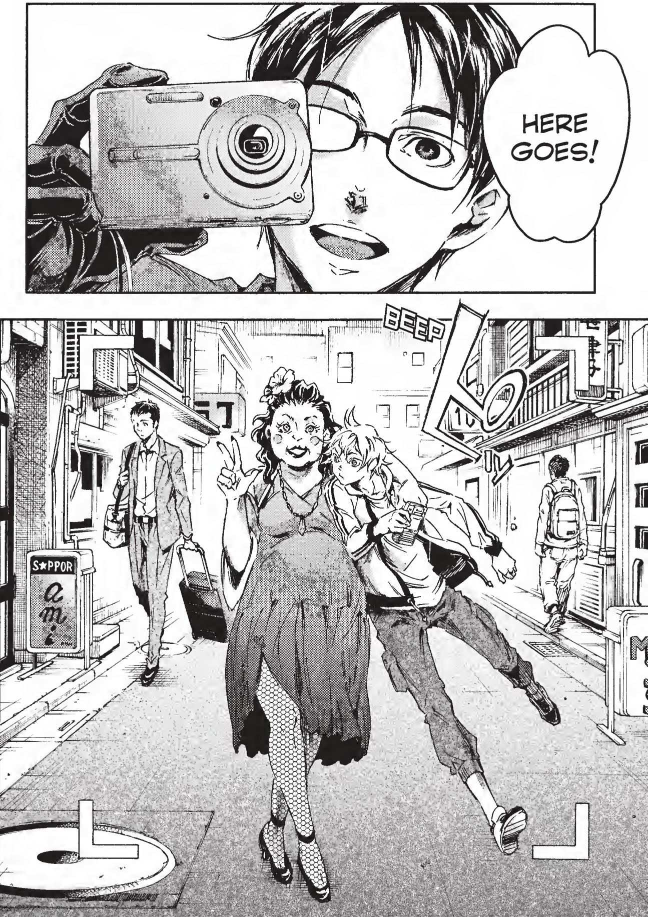
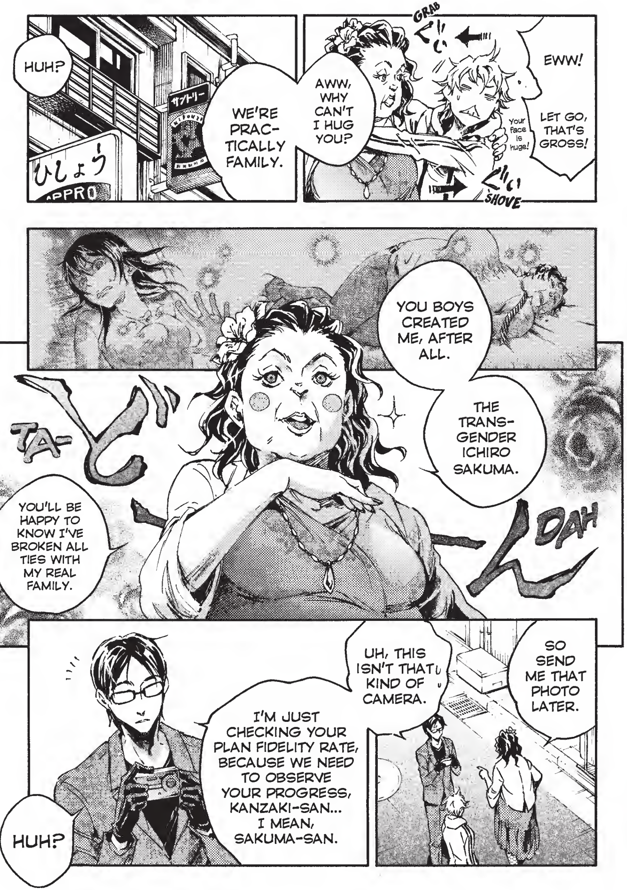
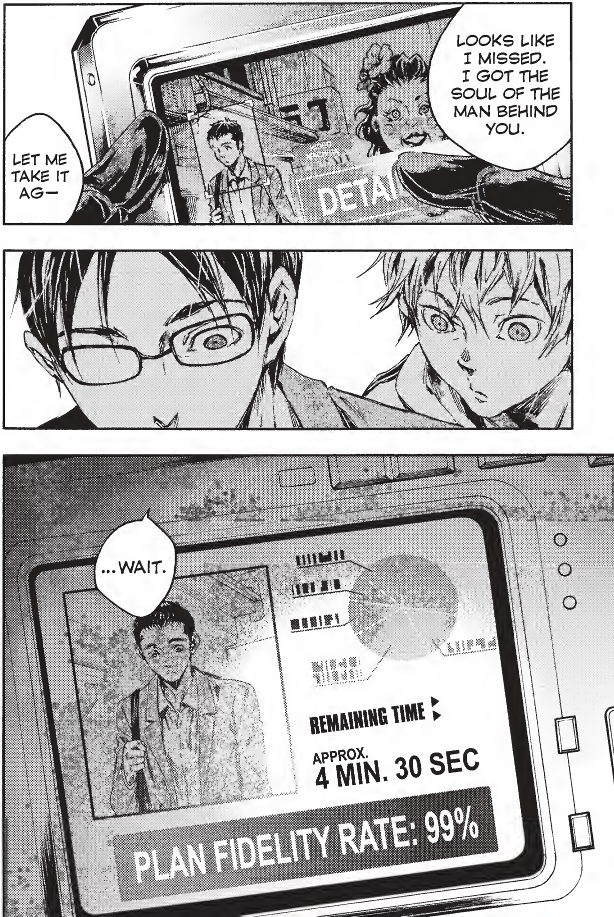
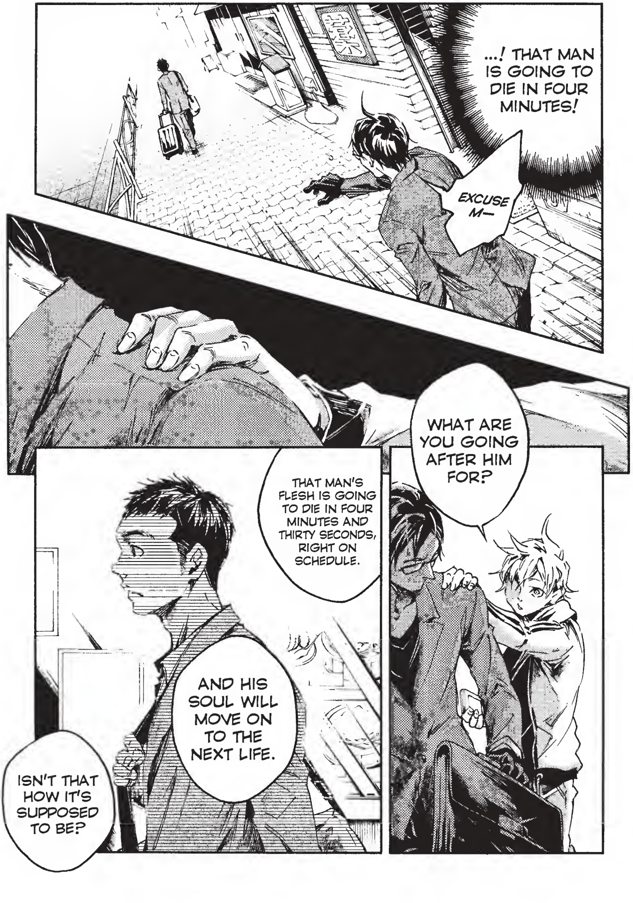
Today, I killed a man.

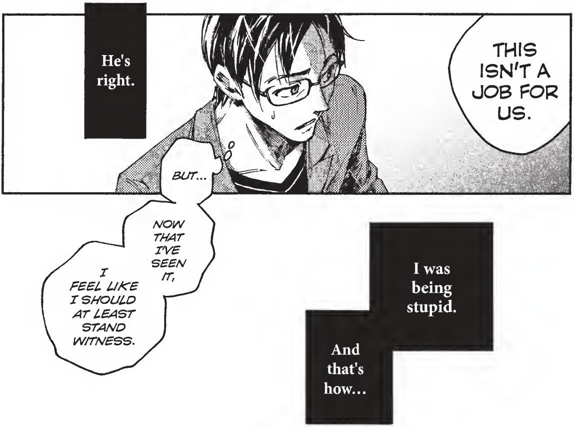
Chapter 12 An Extra Life

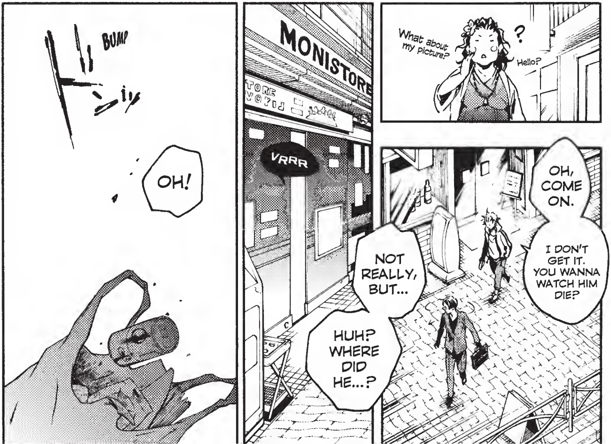

HERE GOES!
BEEP
S★PPOR
ami

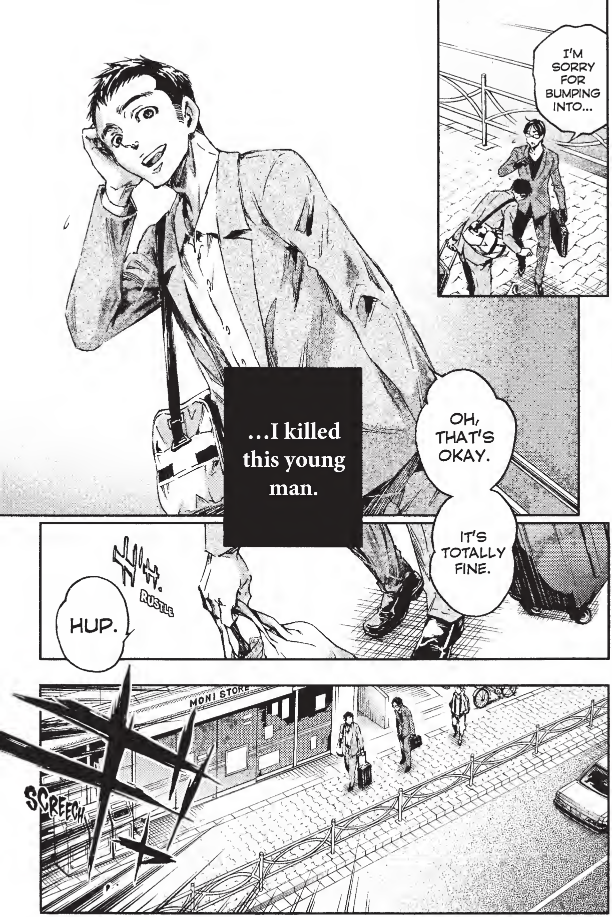

GRAB
EWW!
LET GO, THAT'S GROSS!
Your face is huge!
SHOVE
AWW, WHY CAN'T I HUG YOU?
HUH?
WE'RE PRACTICALLY FAMILY.
サントリー
ひしょう
APPRO
YOU BOYS CREATED ME, AFTER ALL.
THE TRANSGENDER ICHIRO SAKUMA.
TA-
DAH
YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW I'VE BROKEN ALL TIES WITH MY REAL FAMILY.
SO SEND ME THAT PHOTO LATER.
UH, THIS ISN'T THAT KIND OF CAMERA.
I'M JUST CHECKING YOUR PLAN FIDELITY RATE, BECAUSE WE NEED TO OBSERVE YOUR PROGRESS, KANZAKI-SAN... I MEAN, SAKUMA-SAN.
HUH?

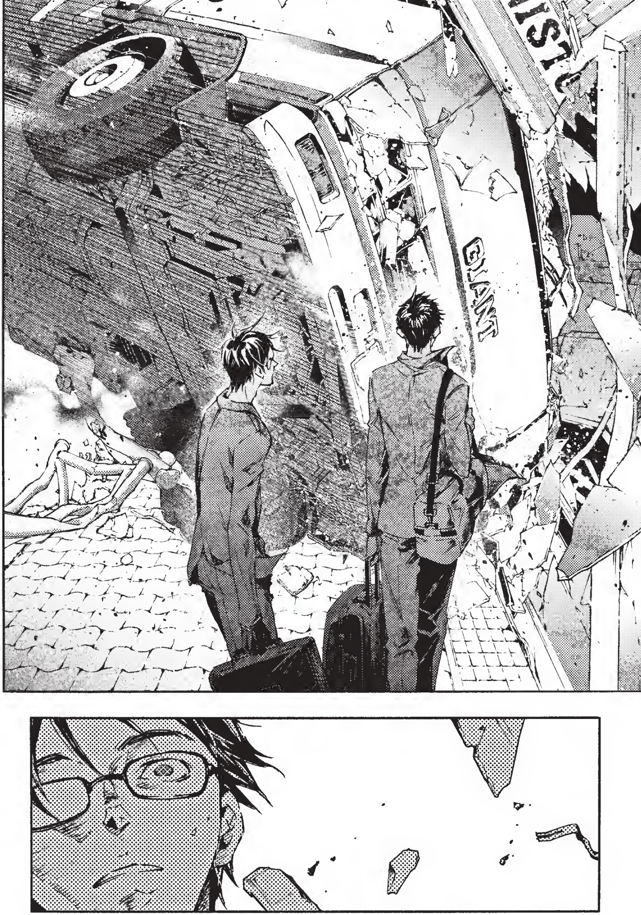

LOOKS LIKE I MISSED. I GOT THE SOUL OF THE MAN BEHIND YOU.
LET ME TAKE IT AG—
DETAI
...WAIT.
REMAINING TIME
APPROX. 4 MIN. 30 SEC
PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 99%


...! THAT MAN IS GOING TO DIE IN FOUR MINUTES!
EXCUSE M—
WHAT ARE YOU GOING AFTER HIM FOR?
THAT MAN'S FLESH IS GOING TO DIE IN FOUR MINUTES AND THIRTY SECONDS, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.
AND HIS SOUL WILL MOVE ON TO THE NEXT LIFE.
ISN'T THAT HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE?

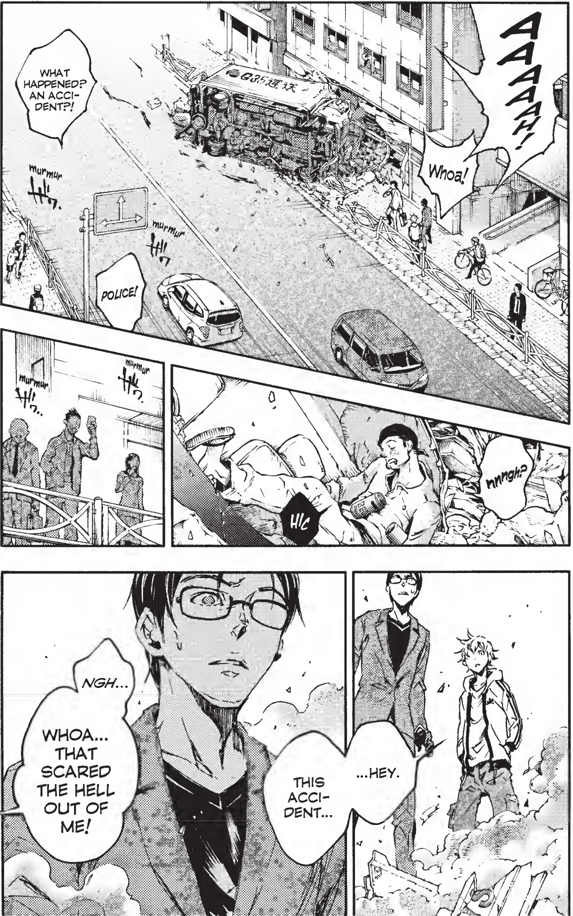

THIS ISN'T A JOB FOR US.
He's right.
BUT...
NOW THAT I'VE SEEN IT,
I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD AT LEAST STAND WITNESS.
I was being stupid.
And that's how...

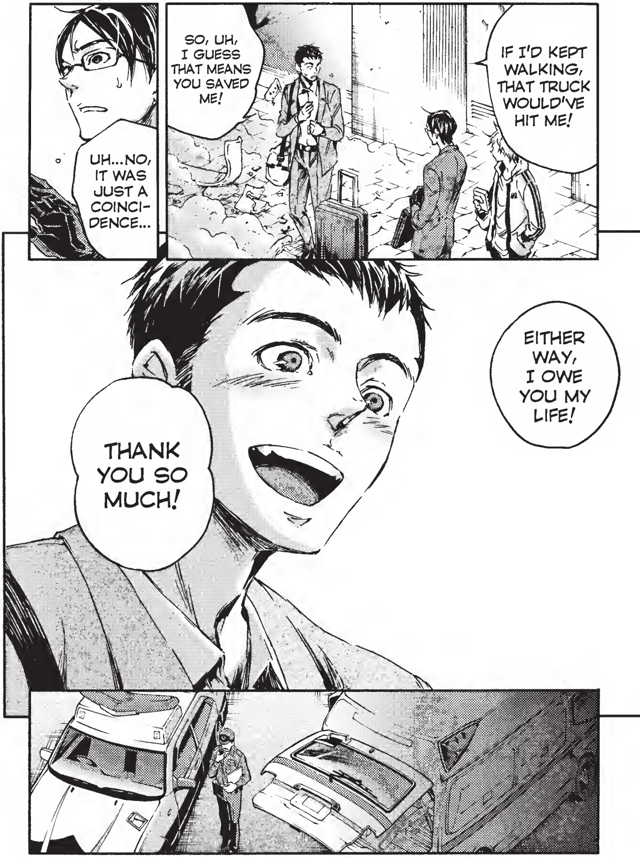

What about my picture?
?
Hello?
OH, COME ON.
I DON'T GET IT. YOU WANNA WATCH HIM DIE?
NOT REALLY, BUT...
HUH? WHERE DID HE...?
MONISTORE
VRRR
BUMP
OH!

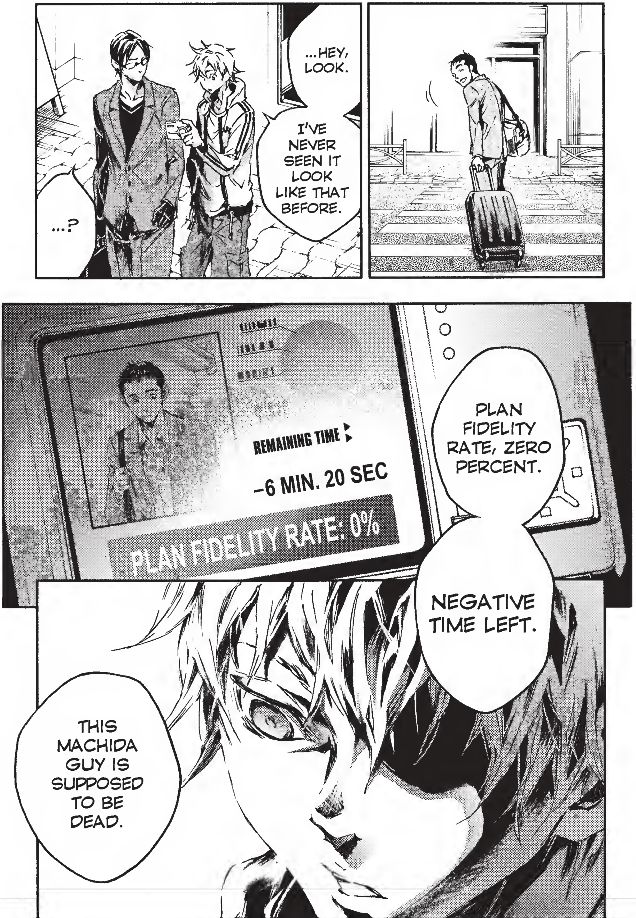

I'M SORRY FOR BUMPING INTO...
OH, THAT'S OKAY.
IT'S TOTALLY FINE.
...I killed this young man.
RUSTLE
HUP.
MONI STORE
SCREECH

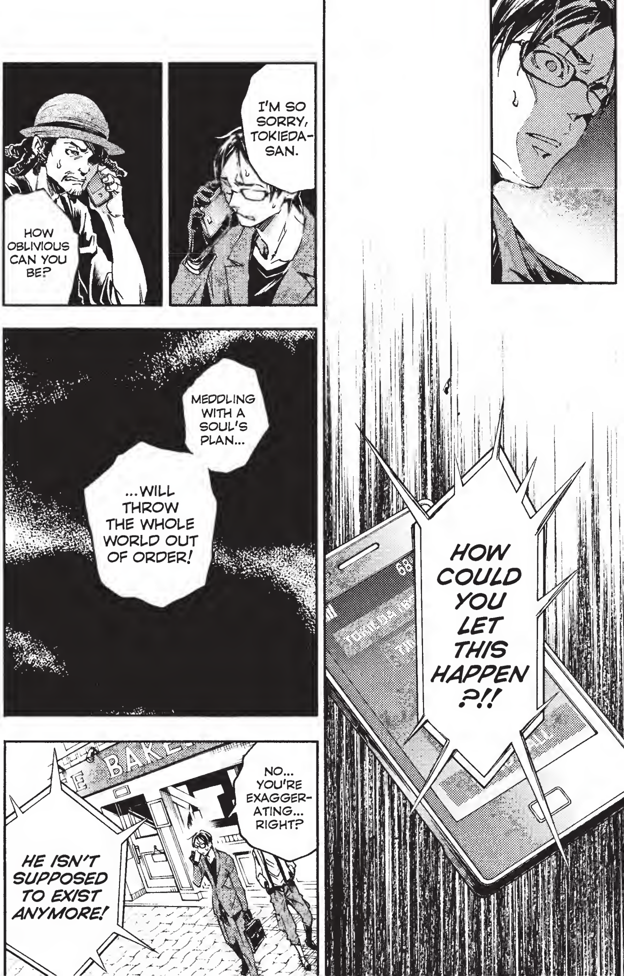

IST
GIANT

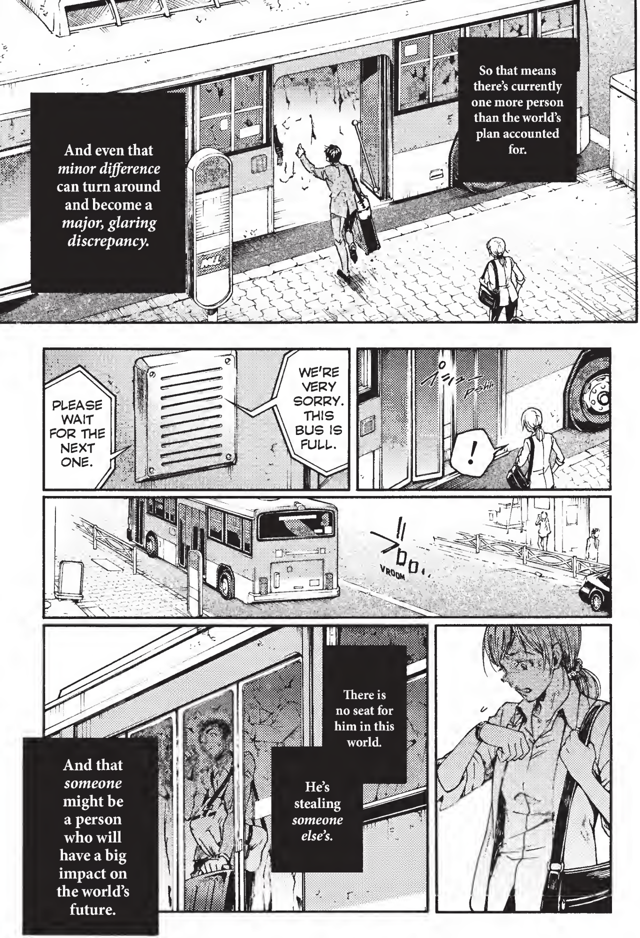
TRUCK: G35 Shipping

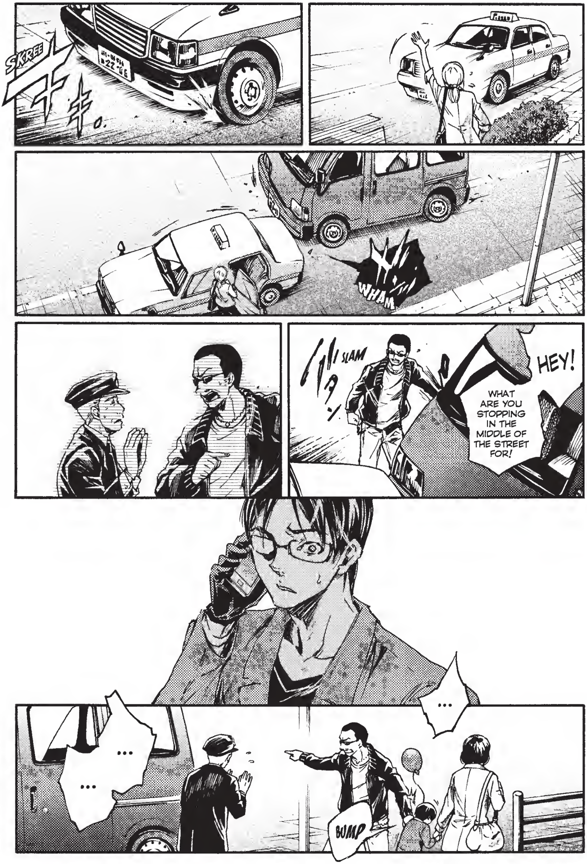

AAAAAH!
Whoa!
WHAT HAPPENED? AN ACCIDENT?!
murmur
murmur
POLICE!
hnngh?
HIC
murmur
murmur
...HEY.
THIS ACCIDENT...
NGH...
WHOA... THAT SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME!

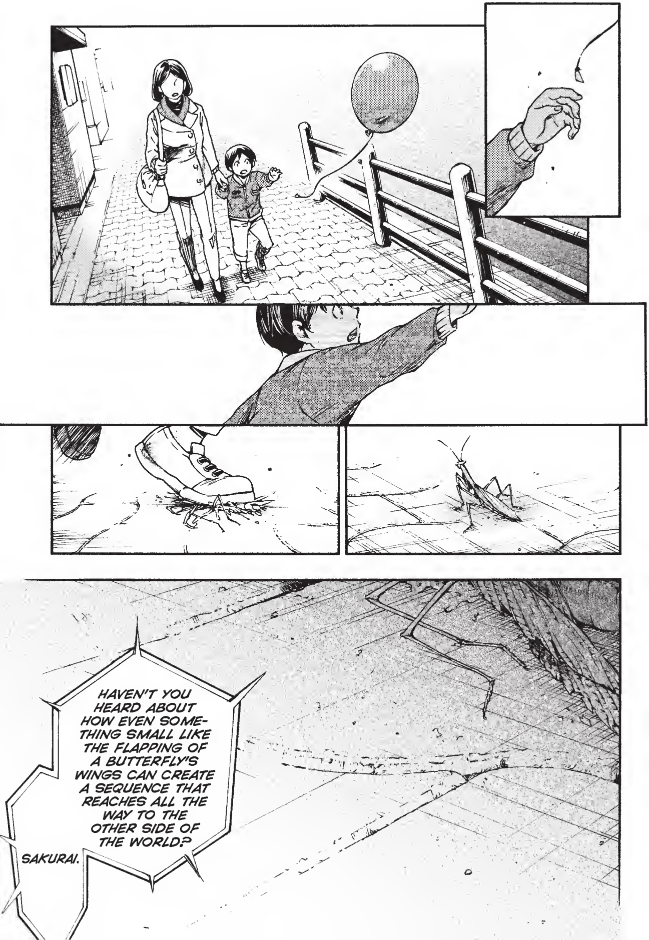

IF I'D KEPT WALKING, THAT TRUCK WOULD'VE HIT ME!
SO, UH, I GUESS THAT MEANS YOU SAVED ME!
UH...NO, IT WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE...
EITHER WAY, I OWE YOU MY LIFE!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!

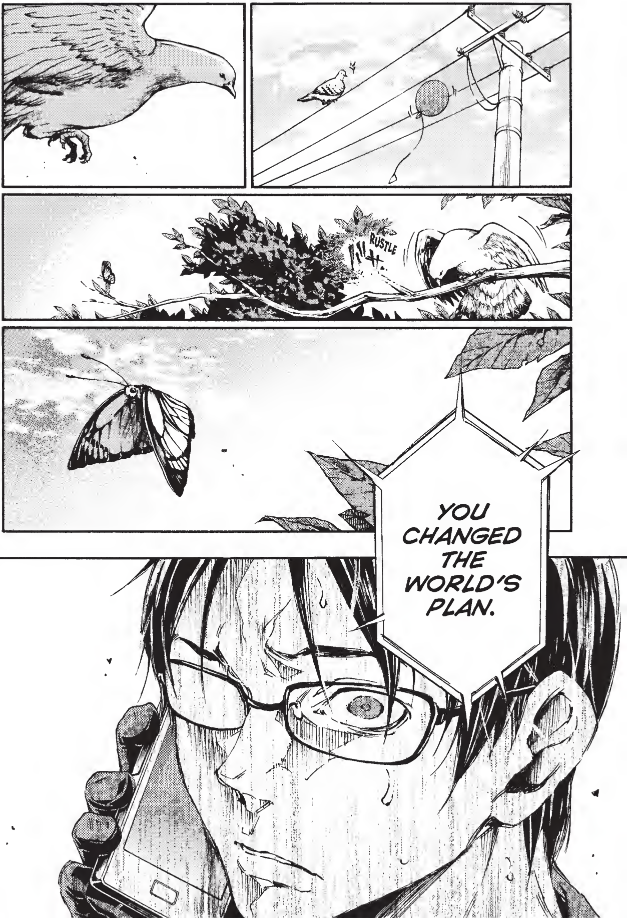

...HEY, LOOK.
I'VE NEVER SEEN IT LOOK LIKE THAT BEFORE.
...?
REMAINING TIME
–6 MIN. 20 SEC
PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 0%
PLAN FIDELITY RATE, ZERO PERCENT.
NEGATIVE TIME LEFT.
THIS MACHIDA GUY IS SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

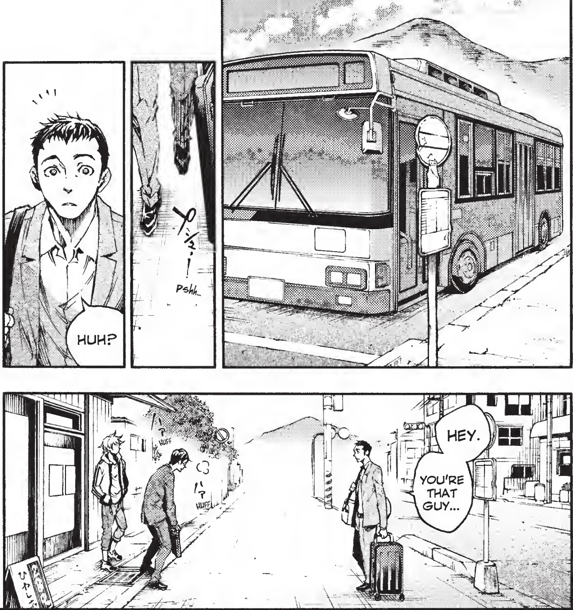

HOW COULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN?!!
I'M SO SORRY, TOKIEDA-SAN.
HOW OBLIVIOUS CAN YOU BE?
MEDDLING WITH A SOUL'S PLAN...
...WILL THROW THE WHOLE WORLD OUT OF ORDER!
NO... YOU'RE EXAGGERATING... RIGHT?
HE ISN'T SUPPOSED TO EXIST ANYMORE!


So that means there's currently one more person than the world's plan accounted for.
And even that *minor difference* can turn around and become a *major, glaring discrepancy.*
Pshh
!
WE'RE VERY SORRY. THIS BUS IS FULL.
PLEASE WAIT FOR THE NEXT ONE.
VROOM
There is no seat for him in this world.
He's stealing *someone else's.*
And that *someone* might be a person who will have a big impact on the world's future.

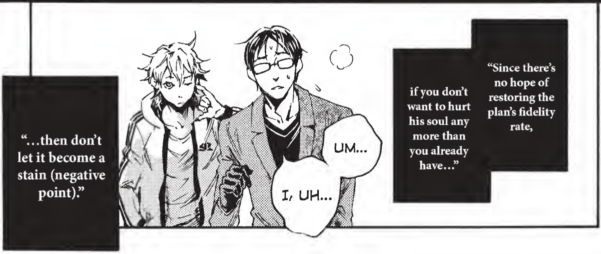

SKREE
WHAM
SLAM
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU STOPPING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET FOR!
...
BUMP
...
...

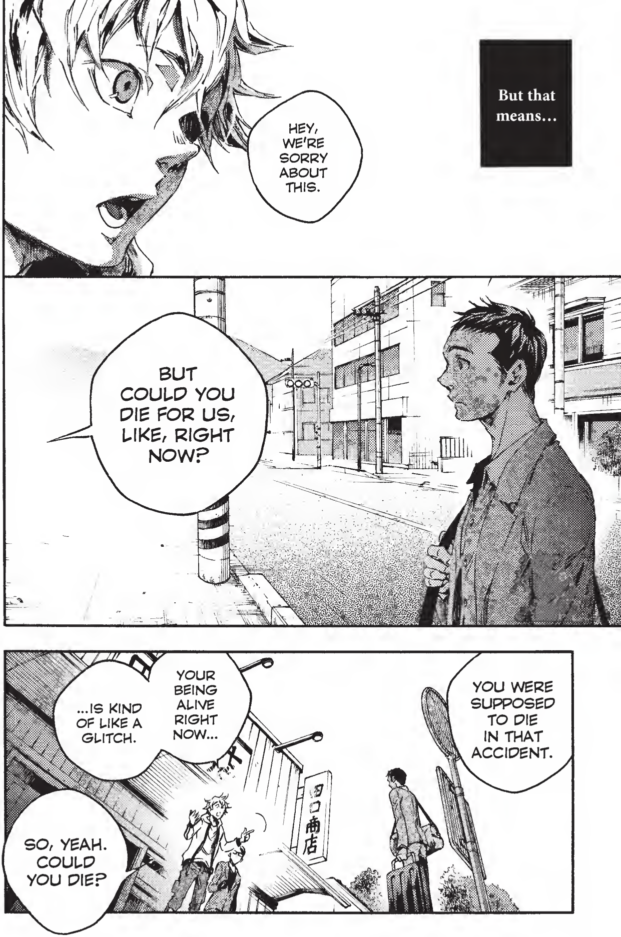

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT HOW EVEN SOMETHING SMALL LIKE THE FLAPPING OF A BUTTERFLY'S WINGS CAN CREATE A SEQUENCE THAT REACHES ALL THE WAY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD?
SAKURAI.

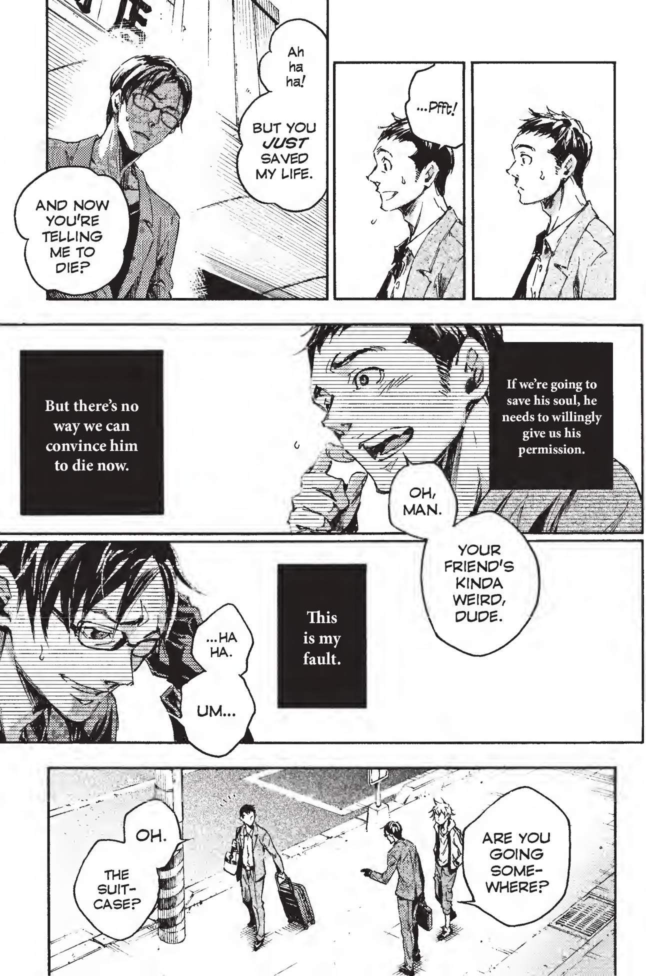

RUSTLE
YOU CHANGED THE WORLD'S PLAN.

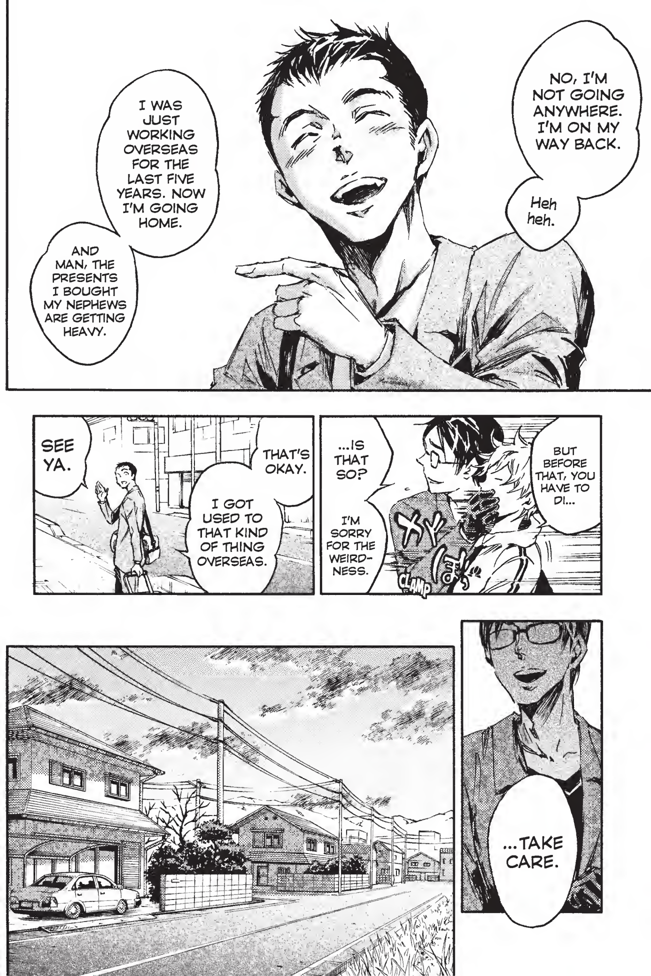

Pshh...
HUH?
HEY.
YOU'RE THAT GUY...
HUFF
HUFF

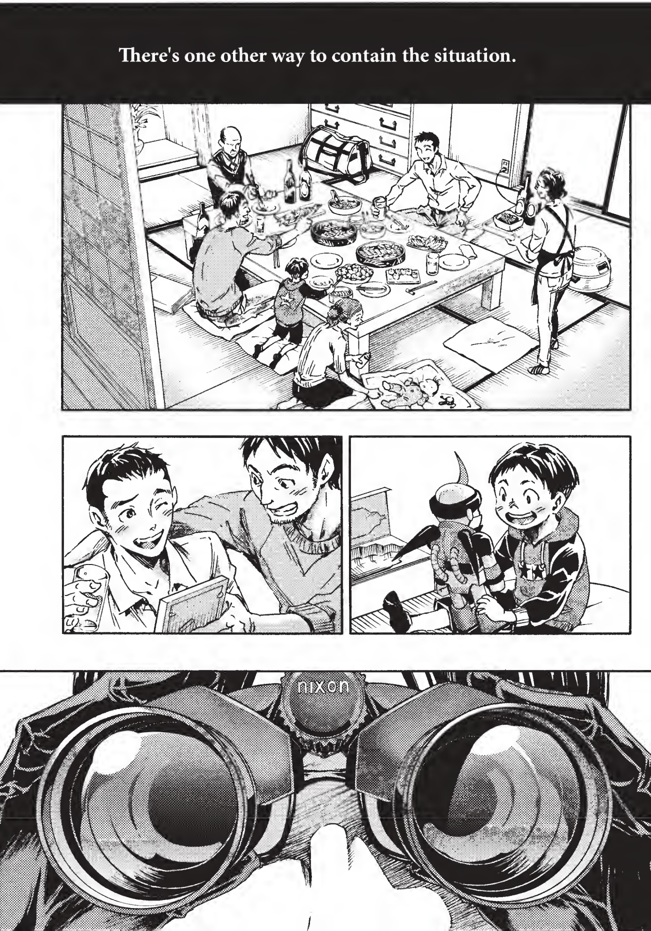
"The best way to minimize the damage…"

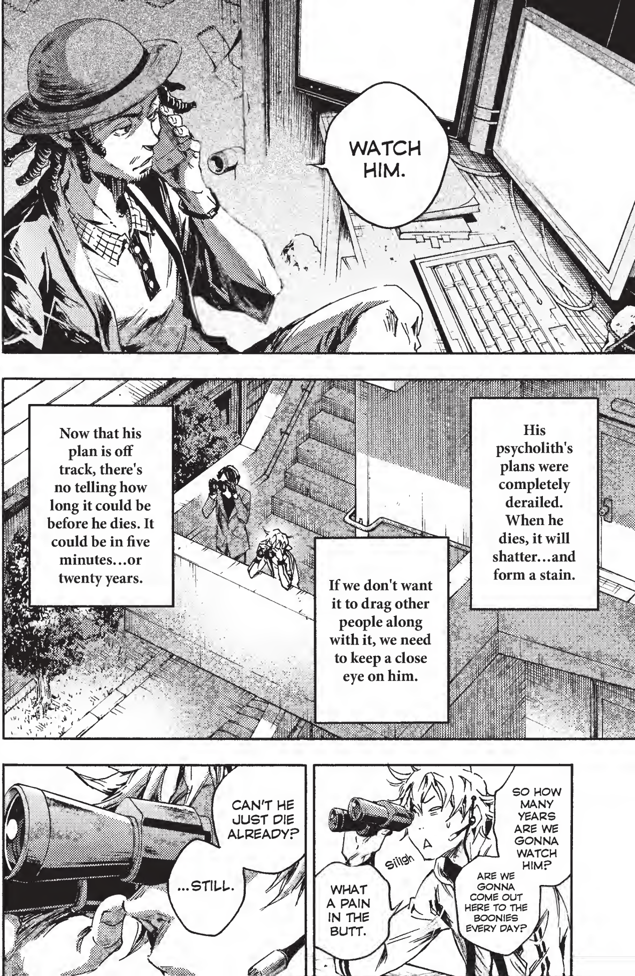

"Since there's no hope of restoring the plan's fidelity rate,
if you don't want to hurt his soul any more than you already have…"
UM...
I, UH...
"…then don't let it become a stain (negative point)."

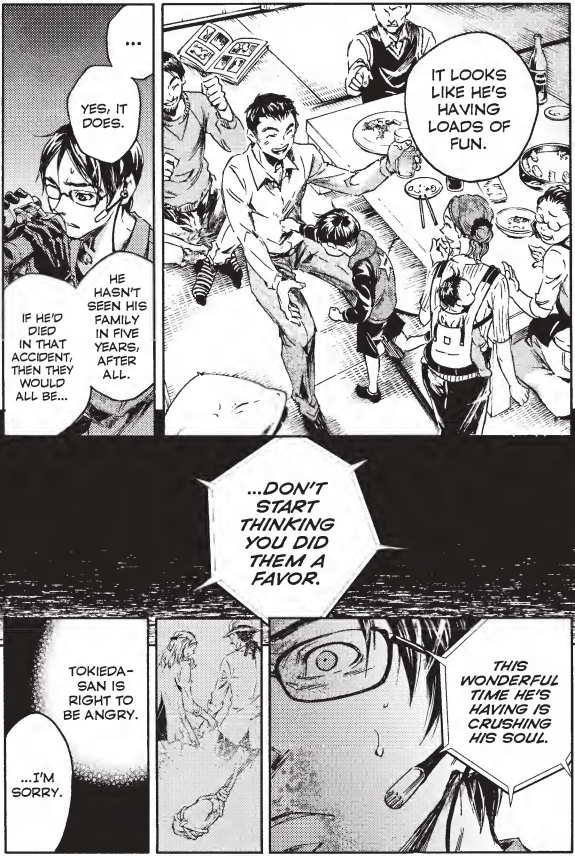

But that means…
HEY, WE'RE SORRY ABOUT THIS.
BUT COULD YOU DIE FOR US, LIKE, RIGHT NOW?
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE IN THAT ACCIDENT.
YOUR BEING ALIVE RIGHT NOW...
...IS KIND OF LIKE A GLITCH.
SO, YEAH. COULD YOU DIE?

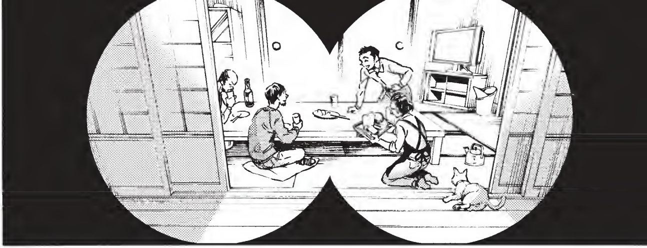

...Pfft!
Ah ha ha!
But you *JUST* saved my life.
And now you're telling me to die?
If we're going to save his soul, he needs to willingly give us his permission.
Oh, man.
But there's no way we can convince him to die now.
Your friend's kinda weird, dude.
This is my fault.
...Ha ha.
Um...
Are you going somewhere?
Oh.
The suitcase?

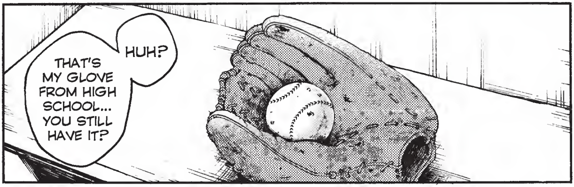

NO, I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE. I'M ON MY WAY BACK.
Heh heh.
I WAS JUST WORKING OVERSEAS FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS. NOW I'M GOING HOME.
AND MAN, THE PRESENTS I BOUGHT MY NEPHEWS ARE GETTING HEAVY.
BUT BEFORE THAT, YOU HAVE TO DI...
...IS THAT SO?
I'M SORRY FOR THE WEIRDNESS.
CLAMP
THAT'S OKAY.
I GOT USED TO THAT KIND OF THING OVERSEAS.
SEE YA.
...TAKE CARE.

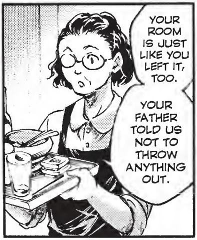

There's one other way to contain the situation.
nixon

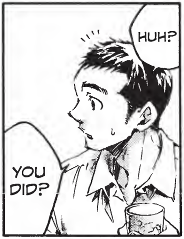

WATCH HIM.
His psycholith's plans were completely derailed. When he dies, it will shatter...and form a stain.
Now that his plan is off track, there's no telling how long it could be before he dies. It could be in five minutes...or twenty years.
If we don't want it to drag other people along with it, we need to keep a close eye on him.
SO HOW MANY YEARS ARE WE GONNA WATCH HIM?
ARE WE GONNA COME OUT HERE TO THE BOONIES EVERY DAY?
Siiigh
WHAT A PAIN IN THE BUTT.
CAN'T HE JUST DIE ALREADY?
...STILL.

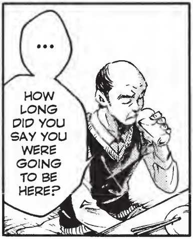

IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S HAVING LOADS OF FUN.
...
YES, IT DOES.
HE HASN'T SEEN HIS FAMILY IN FIVE YEARS, AFTER ALL.
IF HE'D DIED IN THAT ACCIDENT, THEN THEY WOULD ALL BE...
...DON'T START THINKING YOU DID THEM A FAVOR.
THIS WONDERFUL TIME HE'S HAVING IS CRUSHING HIS SOUL.
TOKIEDA-SAN IS RIGHT TO BE ANGRY.
...I'M SORRY.

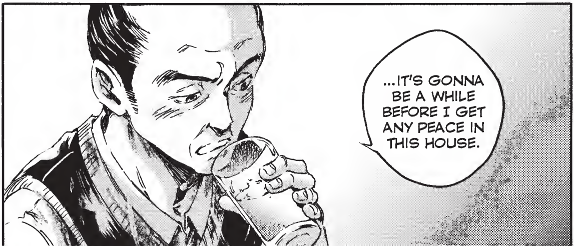


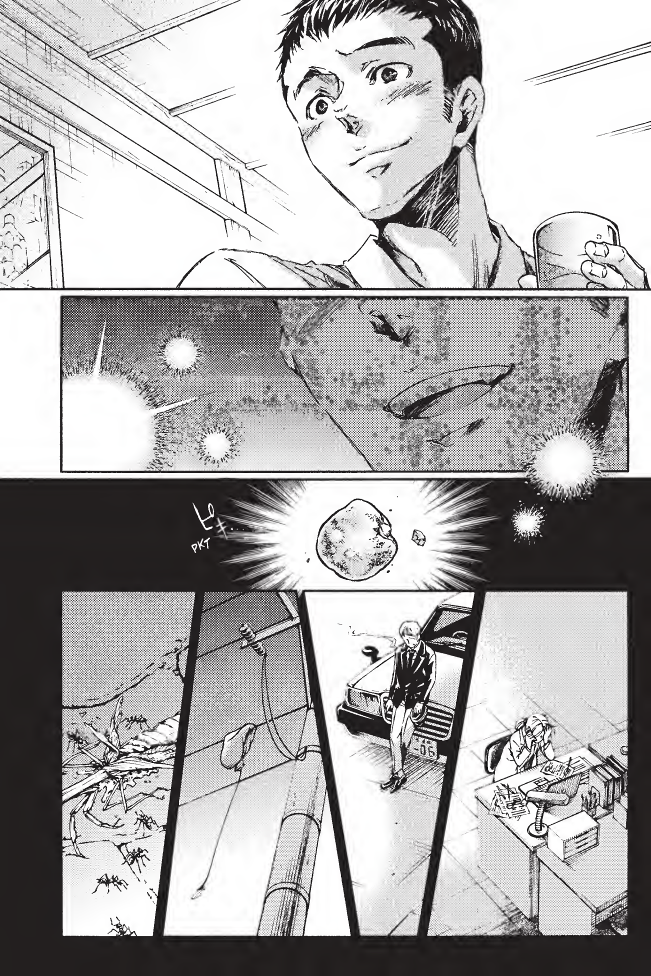

HUH?
THAT'S MY GLOVE FROM HIGH SCHOOL... YOU STILL HAVE IT?

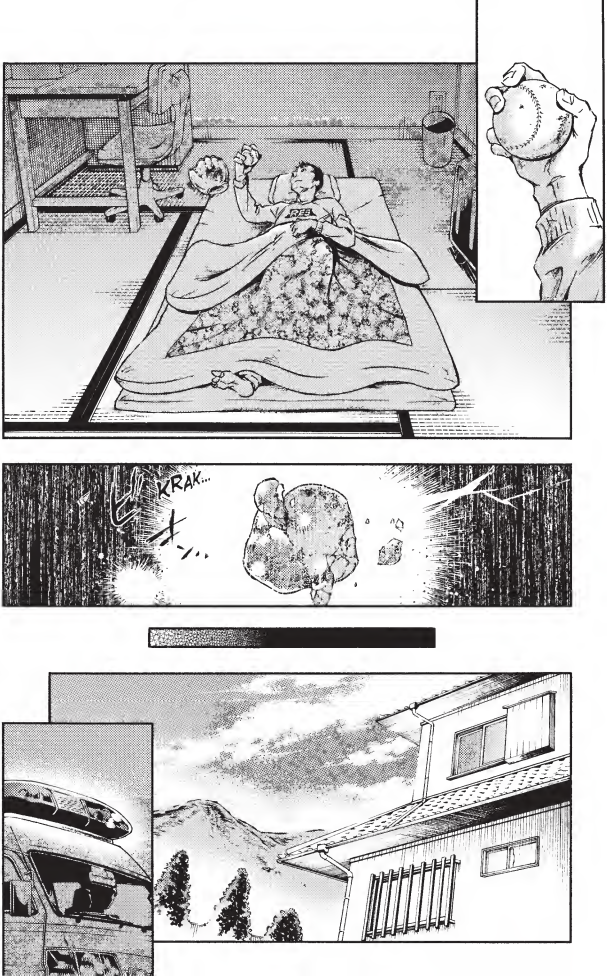

YOUR ROOM IS JUST LIKE YOU LEFT IT, TOO.
YOUR FATHER TOLD US NOT TO THROW ANYTHING OUT.

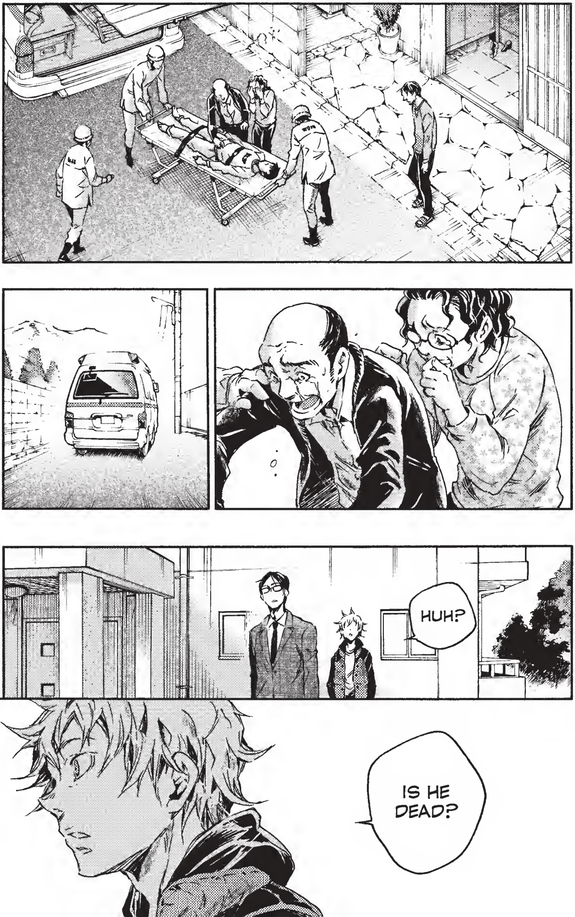

HUH?
YOU DID?

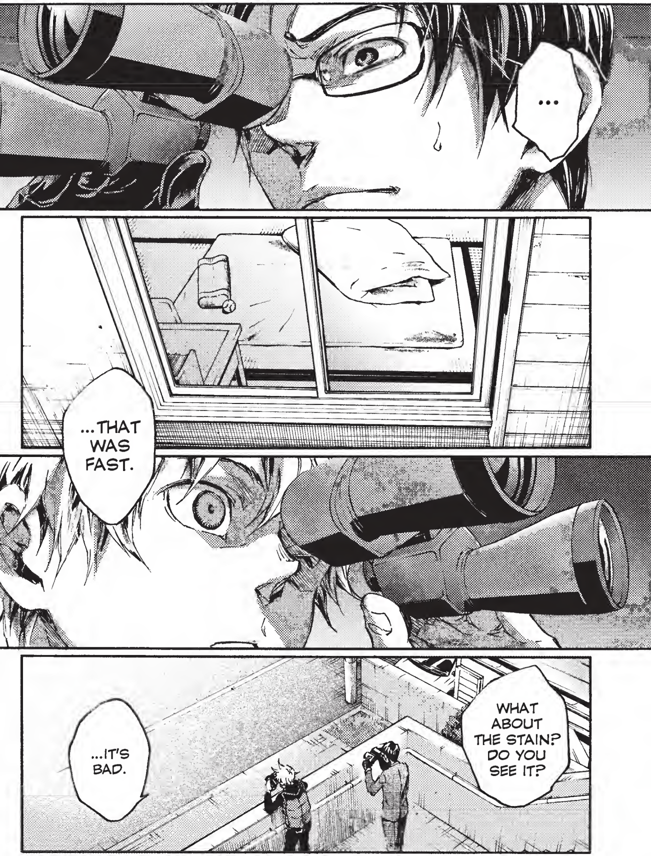

...
HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU WERE GOING TO BE HERE?

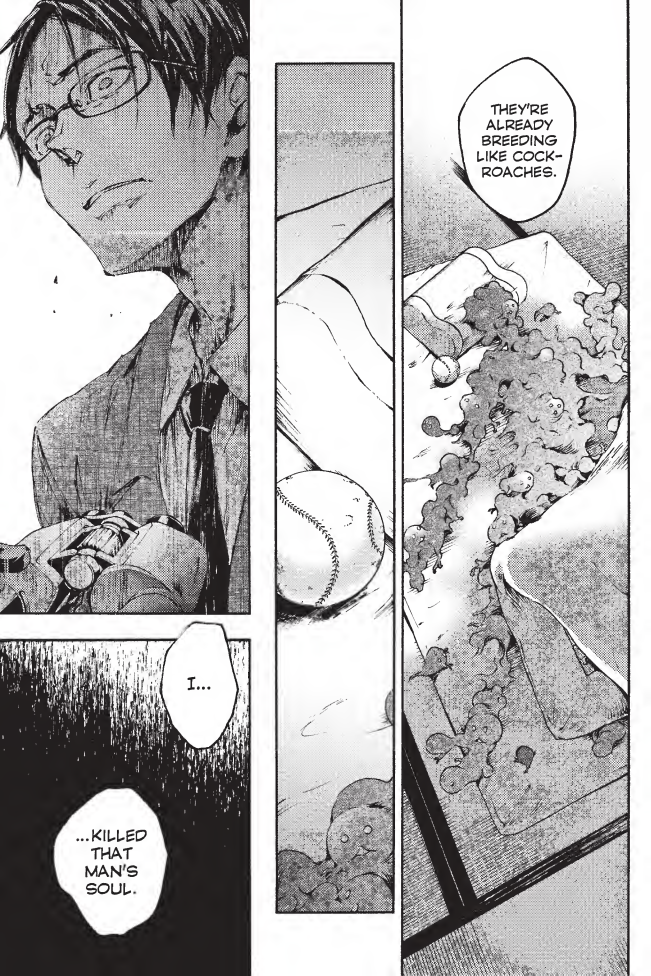

...IT'S GONNA BE A WHILE BEFORE I GET ANY PEACE IN THIS HOUSE.

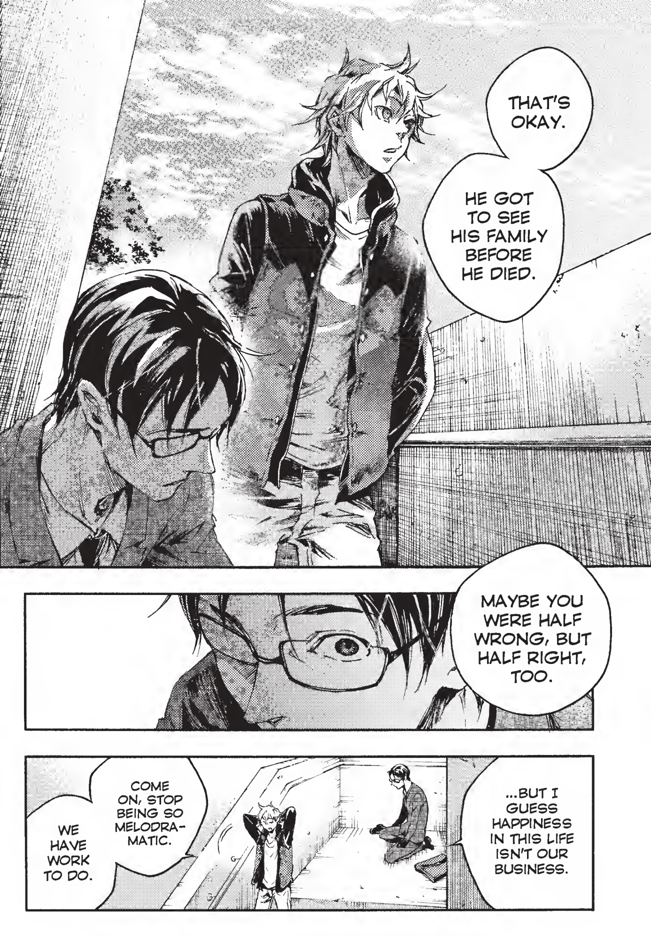

ピキ……
PKT
-06

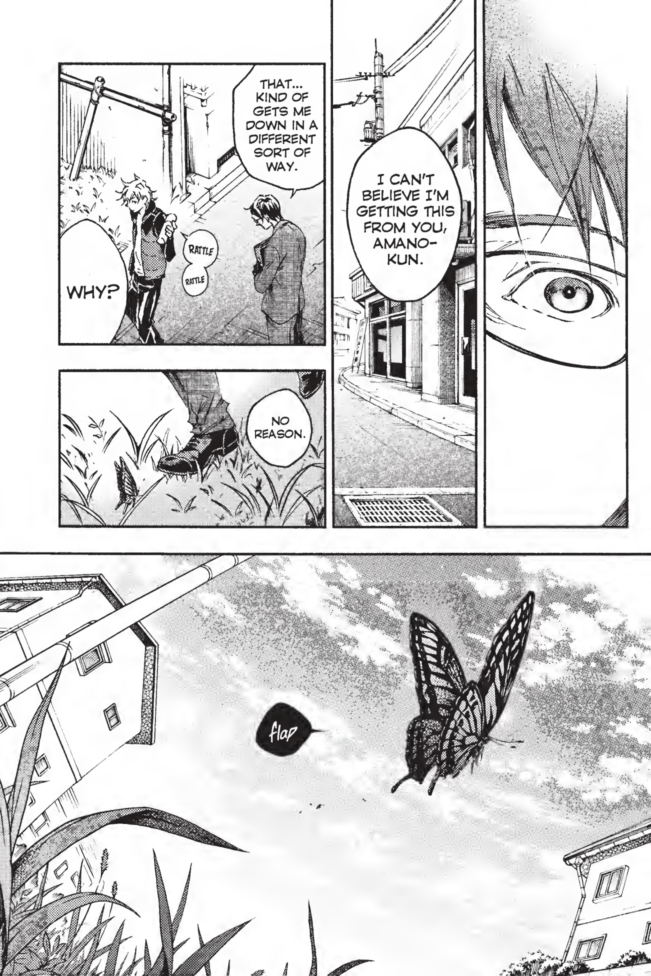

KRAK...

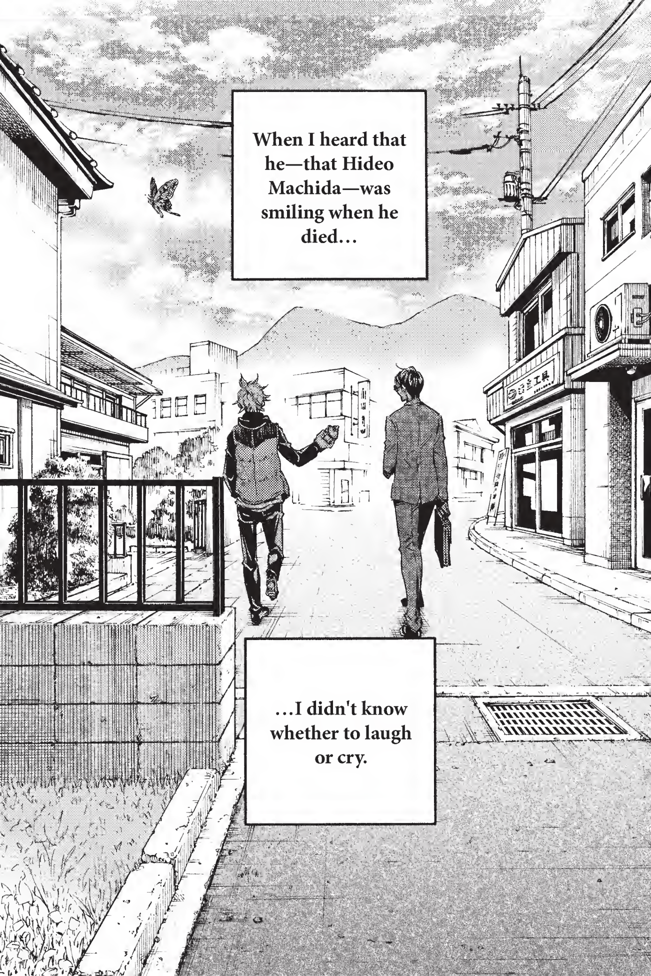

HUH?
IS HE DEAD?


...
...THAT WAS FAST.
WHAT ABOUT THE STAIN? DO YOU SEE IT?
...IT'S BAD.

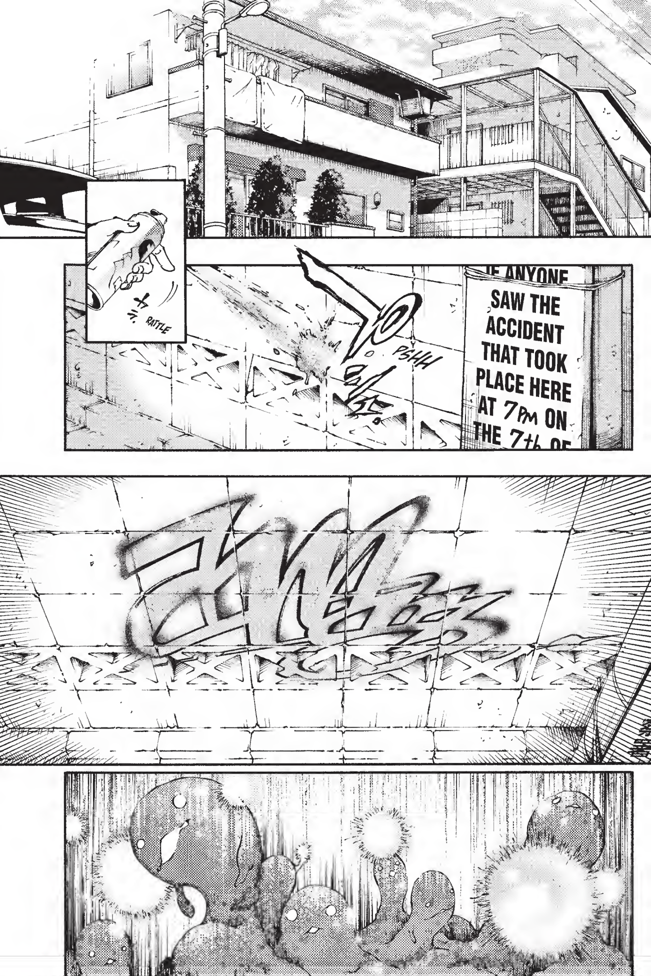

THEY'RE ALREADY BREEDING LIKE COCKROACHES.
I...
...KILLED THAT MAN'S SOUL.

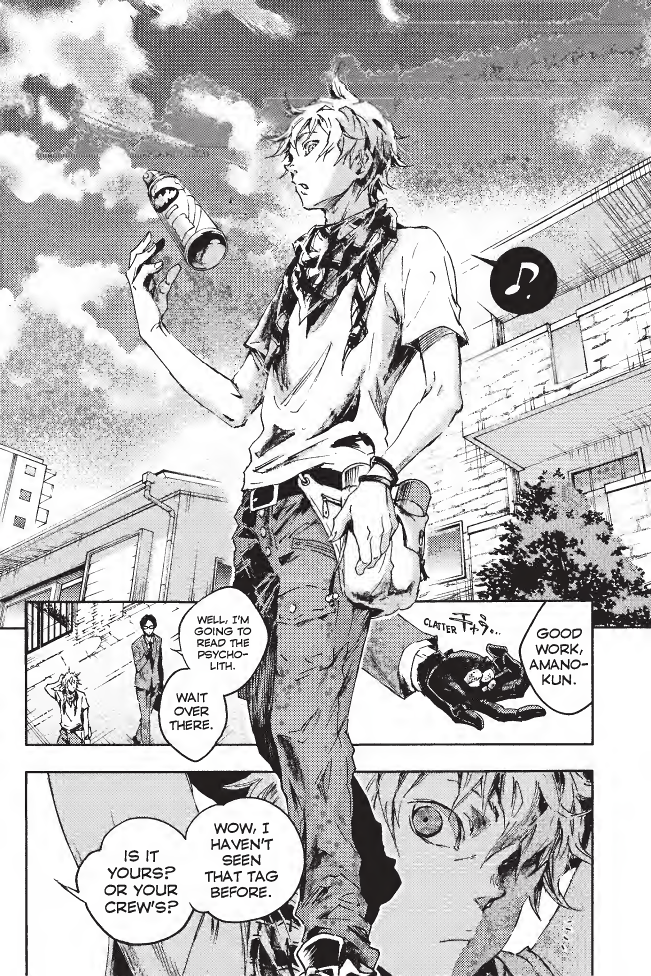

THAT'S OKAY.
HE GOT TO SEE HIS FAMILY BEFORE HE DIED.
MAYBE YOU WERE HALF WRONG, BUT HALF RIGHT, TOO.
...BUT I GUESS HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFE ISN'T OUR BUSINESS.
COME ON, STOP BEING SO MELODRAMATIC.
WE HAVE WORK TO DO.

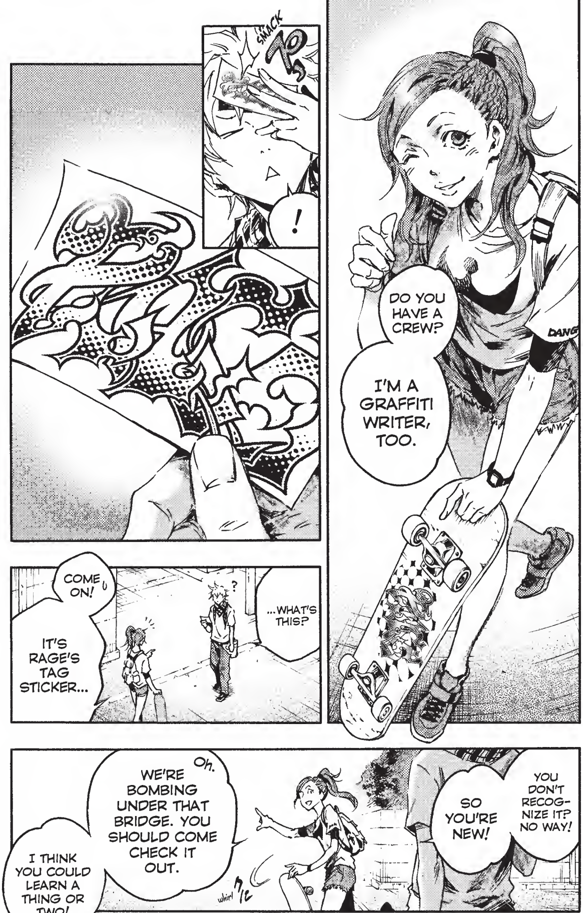

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GETTING THIS FROM YOU, AMANO-KUN.
THAT... KIND OF GETS ME DOWN IN A DIFFERENT SORT OF WAY.
RATTLE
RATTLE
WHY?
NO REASON.
flap

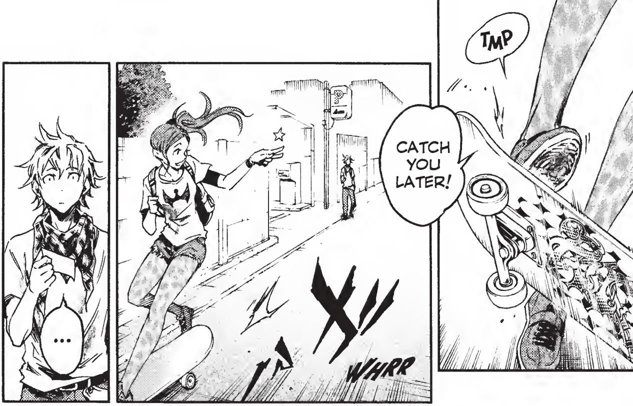

When I heard that he—that Hideo Machida—was smiling when he died…
…I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

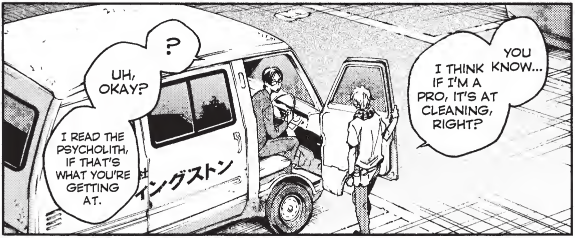
Chapter 13 ✚ Of Holy Land and Legends


IF ANYONE SAW THE ACCIDENT THAT TOOK PLACE HERE AT 7PM ON THE 7th OF
PSHH
RATTLE

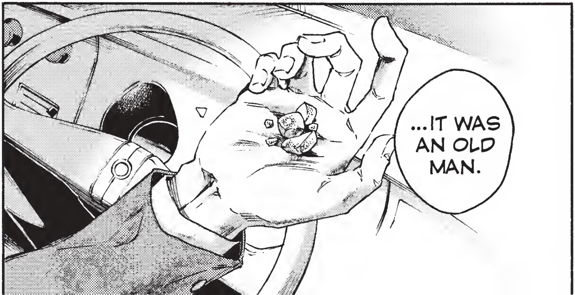

♪
GOOD WORK, AMANO-KUN.
CLATTER チャラ..
WELL, I'M GOING TO READ THE PSYCHOLITH.
WAIT OVER THERE.
WOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT TAG BEFORE.
IS IT YOURS? OR YOUR CREW'S?

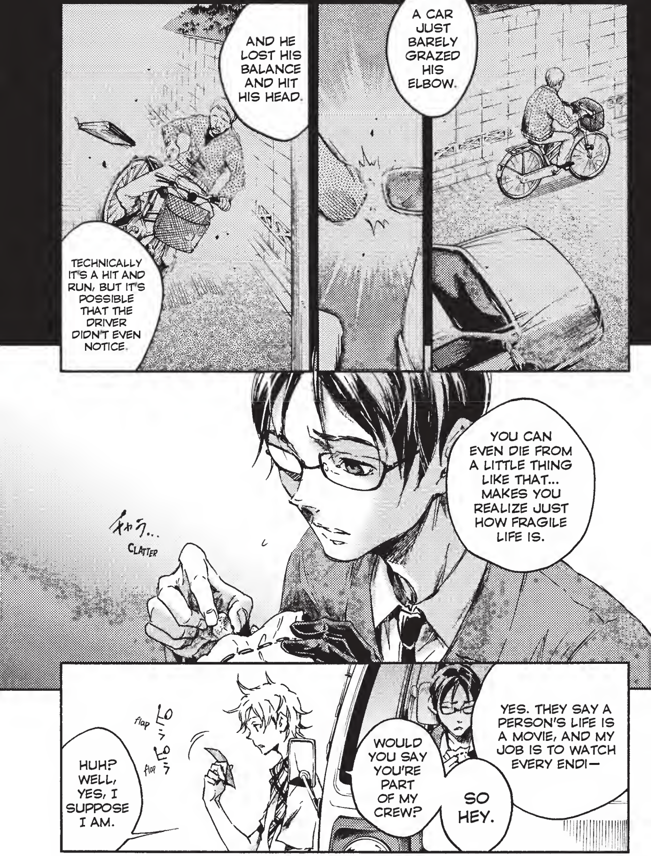

SMACK
!
...WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S RAGE'S TAG STICKER...
COME ON!
DO YOU HAVE A CREW?
I'M A GRAFFITI WRITER, TOO.
DANG
YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE IT? NO WAY!
SO YOU'RE NEW!
Oh.
WE'RE BOMBING UNDER THAT BRIDGE. YOU SHOULD COME CHECK IT OUT.
I THINK YOU COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO!
whirl

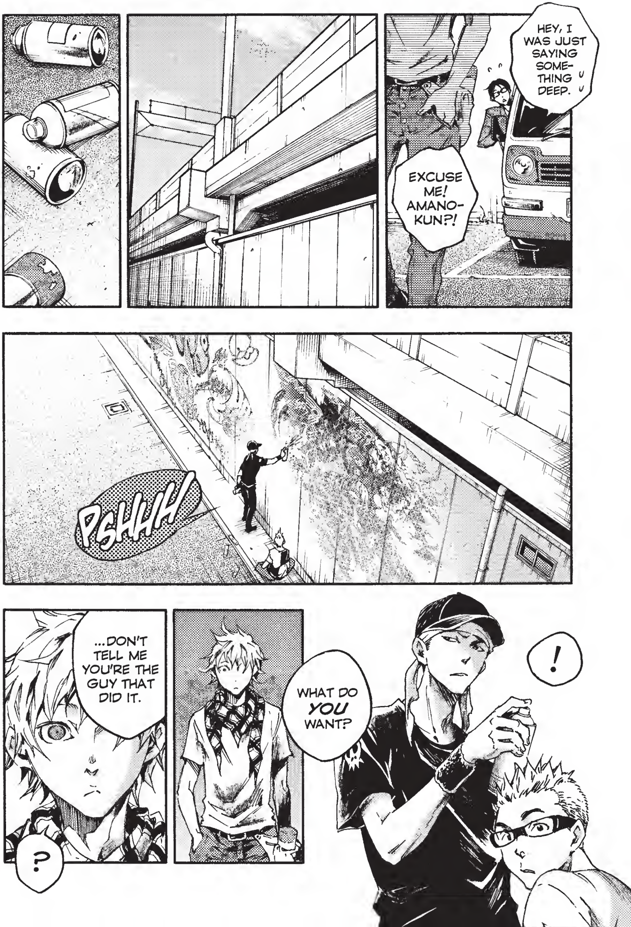

TMP
CATCH YOU LATER!
WHRR
...

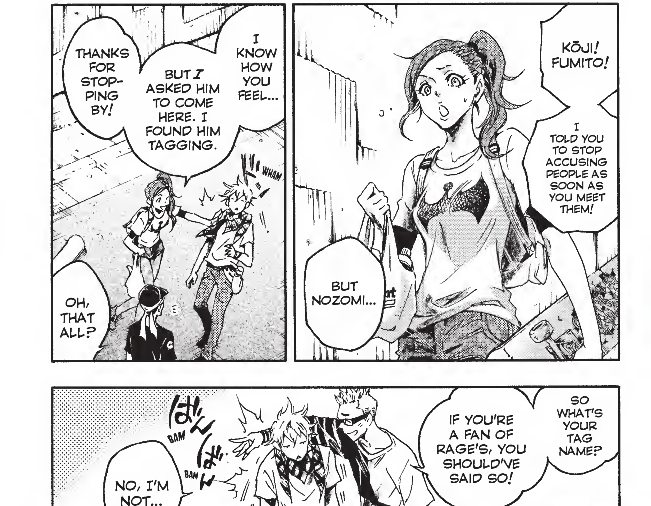

YOU KNOW... I THINK IF I'M A PRO, IT'S AT CLEANING, RIGHT?
?
UH, OKAY?
I READ THE PSYCHOLITH, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AT.
社 イングストン

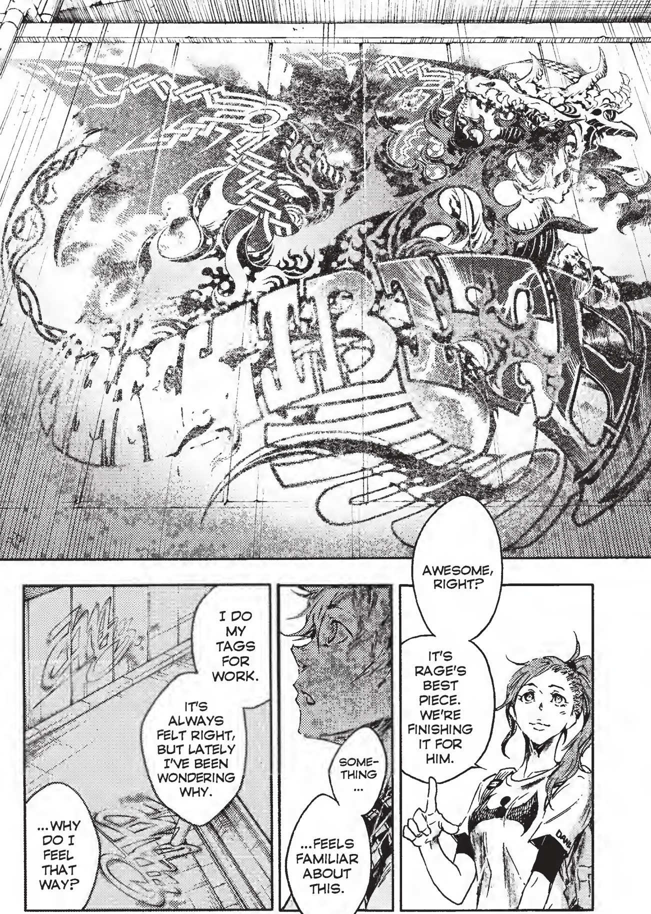
CAR: Y.K. Livingstone

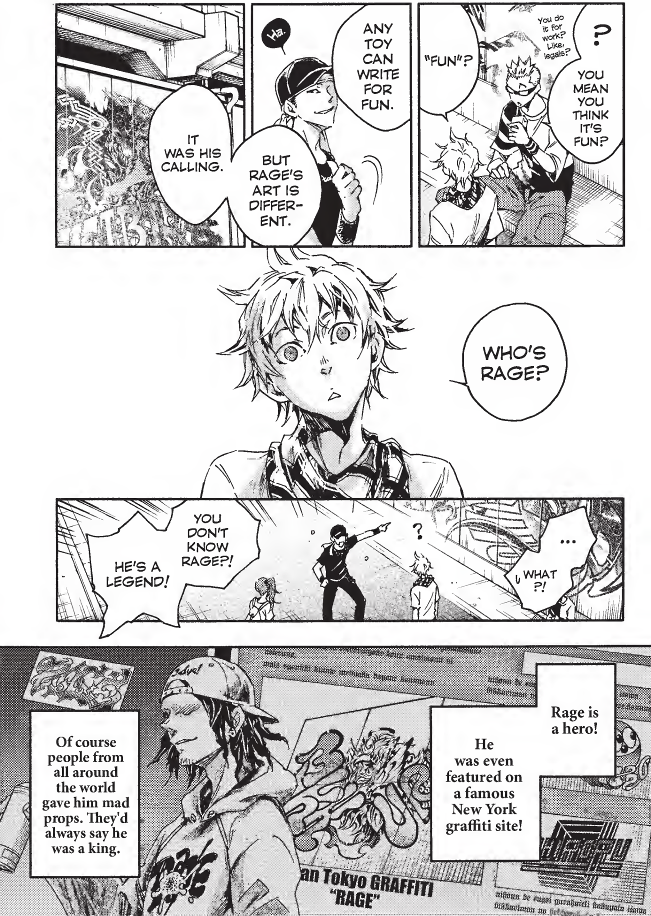

...IT WAS AN OLD MAN.

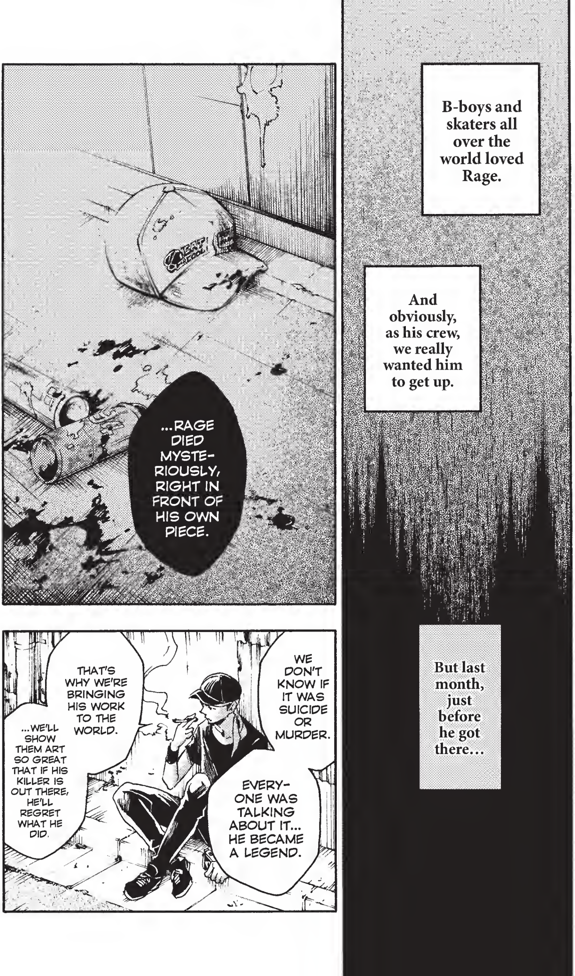

A CAR JUST BARELY GRAZED HIS ELBOW.
AND HE LOST HIS BALANCE AND HIT HIS HEAD.
TECHNICALLY IT'S A HIT AND RUN, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE DRIVER DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE.
YOU CAN EVEN DIE FROM A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT... MAKES YOU REALIZE JUST HOW FRAGILE LIFE IS.
CLATTER
YES. THEY SAY A PERSON'S LIFE IS A MOVIE, AND MY JOB IS TO WATCH EVERY ENDI—
SO HEY.
WOULD YOU SAY YOU'RE PART OF MY CREW?
HUH? WELL, YES, I SUPPOSE I AM.
flap
flap

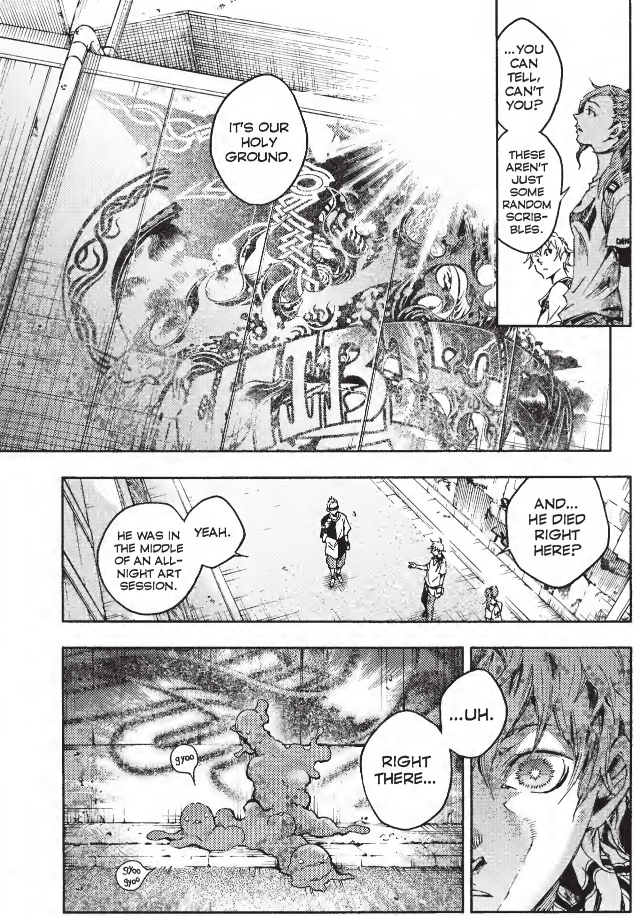

HEY, I WAS JUST SAYING SOMETHING DEEP.
EXCUSE ME! AMANO-KUN?!
PSHHH
!
WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?
...DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THE GUY THAT DID IT.
?

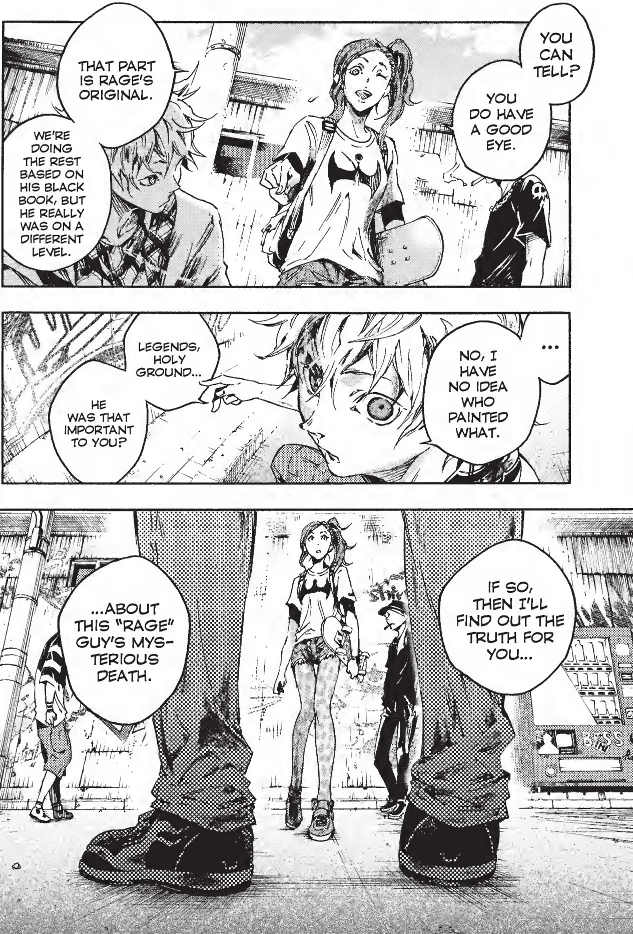

KŌJI! FUMITO!
I TOLD YOU TO STOP ACCUSING PEOPLE AS SOON AS YOU MEET THEM!
BUT NOZOMI...
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL...
BUT *I* ASKED HIM TO COME HERE. I FOUND HIM TAGGING.
THANKS FOR STOPPING BY!
WHAM
OH, THAT ALL?
SO WHAT'S YOUR TAG NAME?
IF YOU'RE A FAN OF RAGE'S, YOU SHOULD'VE SAID SO!
ばん ばん
BAM
BAM
NO, I'M NOT...
DANGER

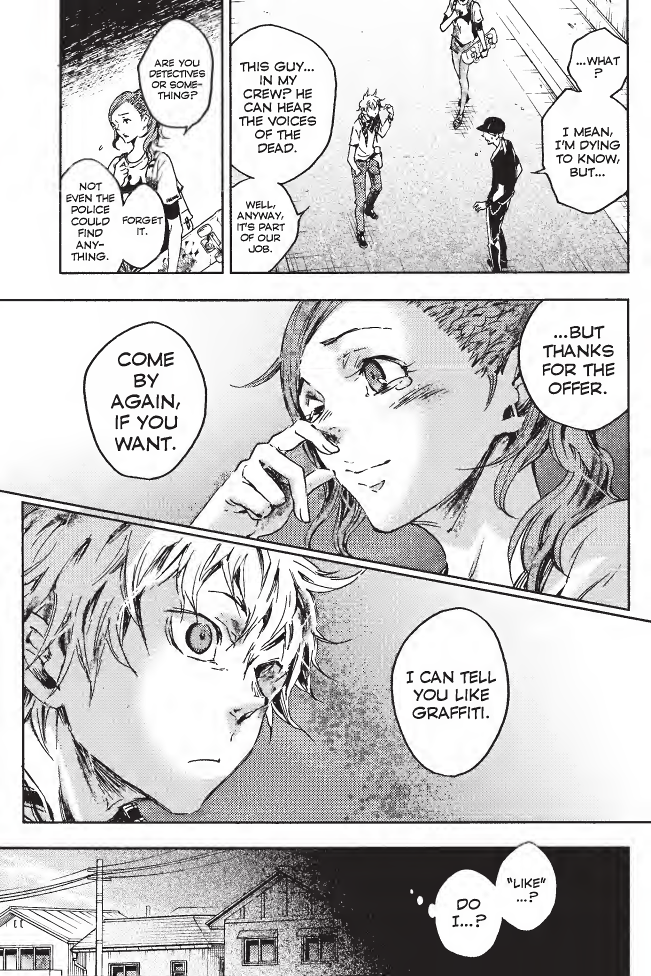

AWESOME, RIGHT?
IT'S RAGE'S BEST PIECE. WE'RE FINISHING IT FOR HIM.
SOMETHING...
...FEELS FAMILIAR ABOUT THIS.
I DO MY TAGS FOR WORK.
IT'S ALWAYS FELT RIGHT, BUT LATELY I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHY.
...WHY DO I FEEL THAT WAY?

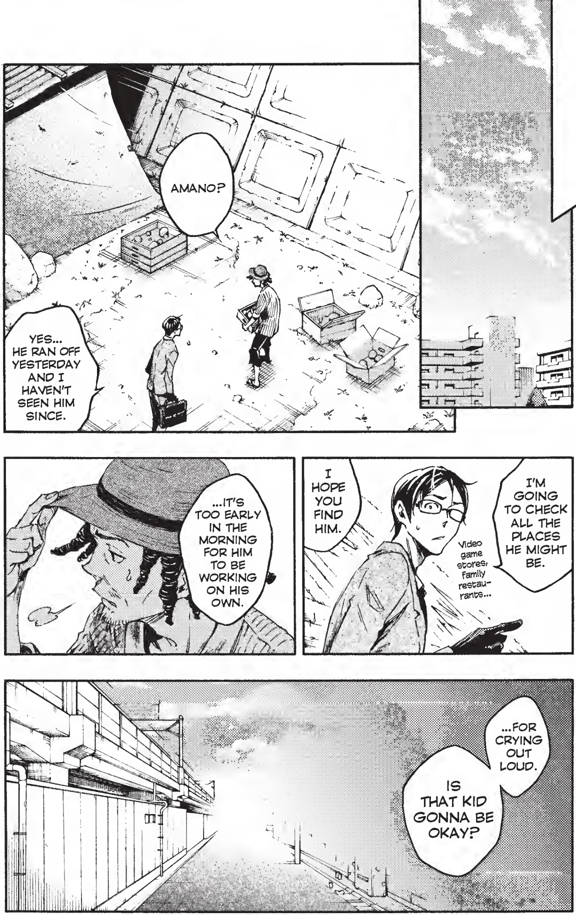

"FUN"?
YOU MEAN YOU THINK IT'S FUN?
You do it for work? Like, legals?
?
Ha.
ANY TOY CAN WRITE FOR FUN.
BUT RAGE'S ART IS DIFFERENT.
IT WAS HIS CALLING.
WHO'S RAGE?
...
WHAT?!
?
YOU DON'T KNOW RAGE?!
HE'S A LEGEND!
Rage is a hero!
He was even featured on a famous New York graffiti site!
Of course people from all around the world gave him mad props. They'd always say he was a king.
an Tokyo GRAFFITI "RAGE"

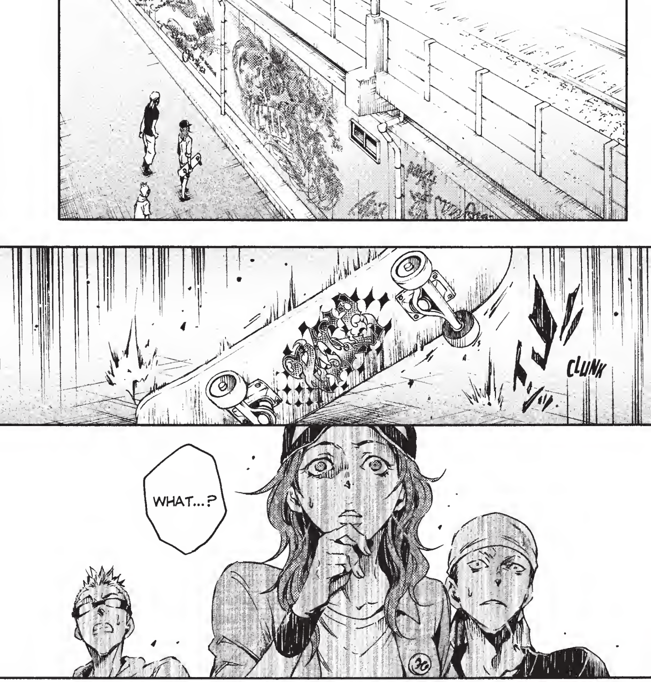

B-boys and skaters all over the world loved Rage.
And obviously, as his crew, we really wanted him to get up.
But last month, just before he got there…
...RAGE DIED MYSTERIOUSLY, RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIS OWN PIECE.
WE DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS SUICIDE OR MURDER.
EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT IT... HE BECAME A LEGEND.
THAT'S WHY WE'RE BRINGING HIS WORK TO THE WORLD.
...WE'LL SHOW THEM ART SO GREAT THAT IF HIS KILLER IS OUT THERE, HE'LL REGRET WHAT HE DID.

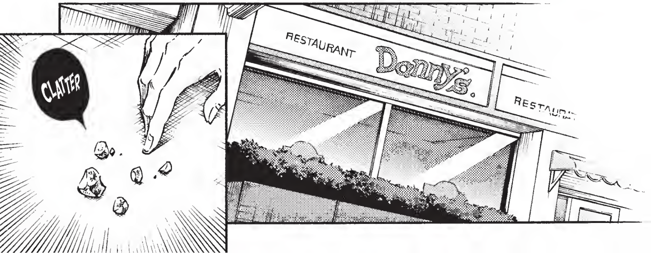

...YOU CAN TELL, CAN'T YOU?
THESE AREN'T JUST SOME RANDOM SCRIBBLES.
IT'S OUR HOLY GROUND.
AND... HE DIED RIGHT HERE?
YEAH.
HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ALL-NIGHT ART SESSION.
...UH.
RIGHT THERE...
gyoo
gyoo gyoo

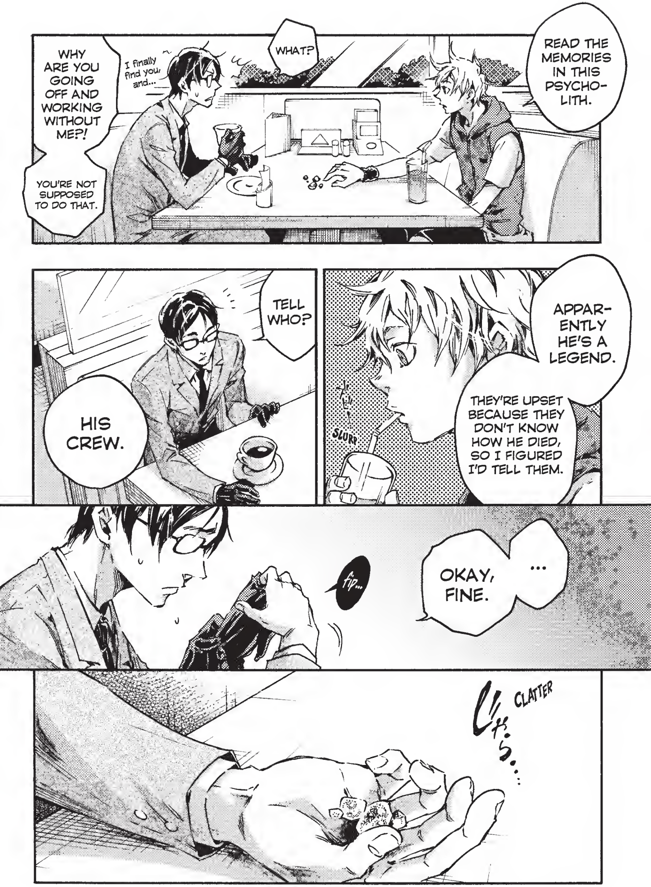

YOU CAN TELL?
YOU DO HAVE A GOOD EYE.
THAT PART IS RAGE'S ORIGINAL.
WE'RE DOING THE REST BASED ON HIS BLACK BOOK, BUT HE REALLY WAS ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL.
...
NO, I HAVE NO IDEA WHO PAINTED WHAT.
LEGENDS, HOLY GROUND...
HE WAS THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU?
IF SO, THEN I'LL FIND OUT THE TRUTH FOR YOU...
...ABOUT THIS "RAGE" GUY'S MYSTERIOUS DEATH.

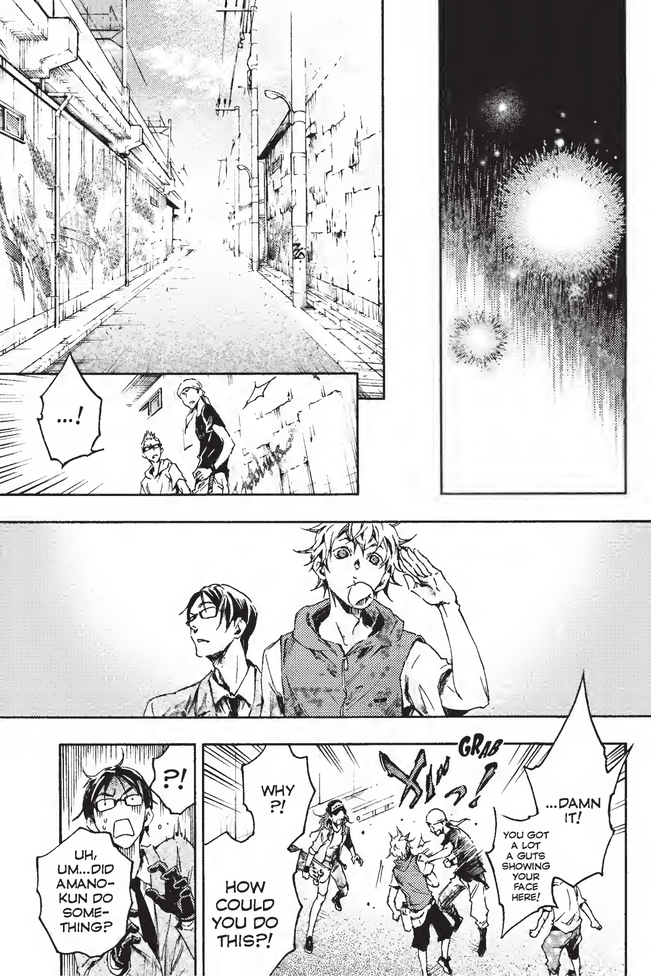

...WHAT?
I MEAN, I'M DYING TO KNOW, BUT...
THIS GUY... IN MY CREW? HE CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF THE DEAD.
WELL, ANYWAY, IT'S PART OF OUR JOB.
ARE YOU DETECTIVES OR SOMETHING?
FORGET IT.
NOT EVEN THE POLICE COULD FIND ANYTHING.
...BUT THANKS FOR THE OFFER.
COME BY AGAIN, IF YOU WANT.
I CAN TELL YOU LIKE GRAFFITI.
"LIKE" ...?
DO I...?

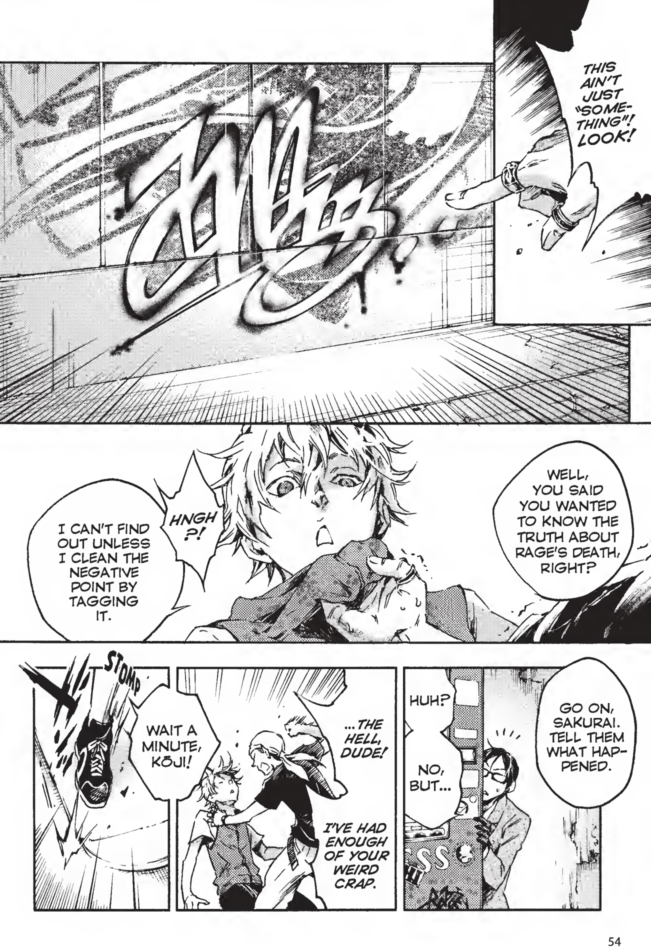

AMANO?
YES... HE RAN OFF YESTERDAY AND I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE.
I'M GOING TO CHECK ALL THE PLACES HE MIGHT BE.
Video game stores, family restaurants...
I HOPE YOU FIND HIM.
...IT'S TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING FOR HIM TO BE WORKING ON HIS OWN.
...FOR CRYING OUT LOUD.
IS THAT KID GONNA BE OKAY?

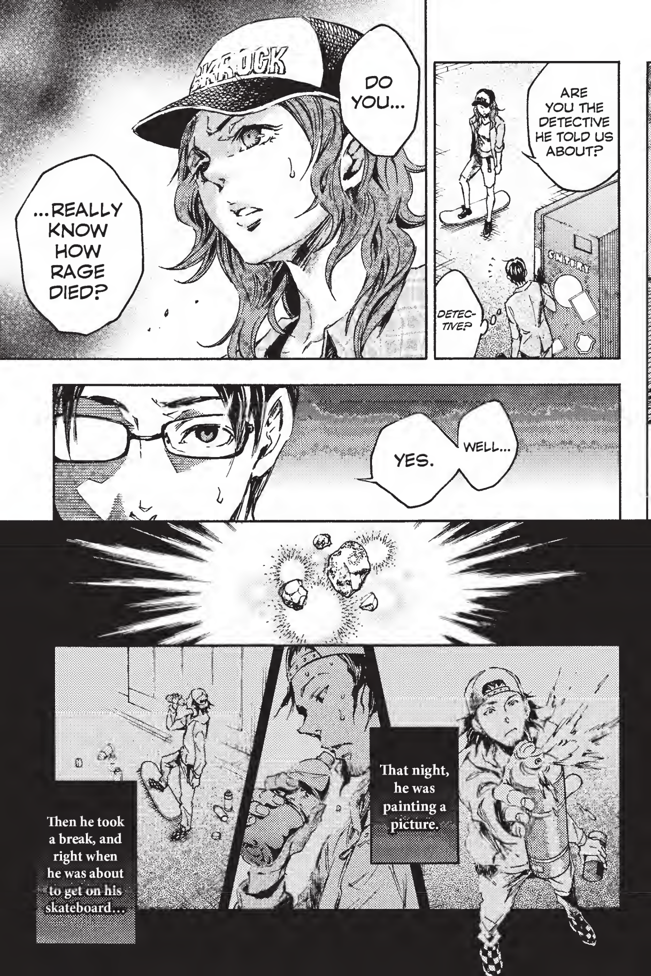

CLUNK
WHAT...?

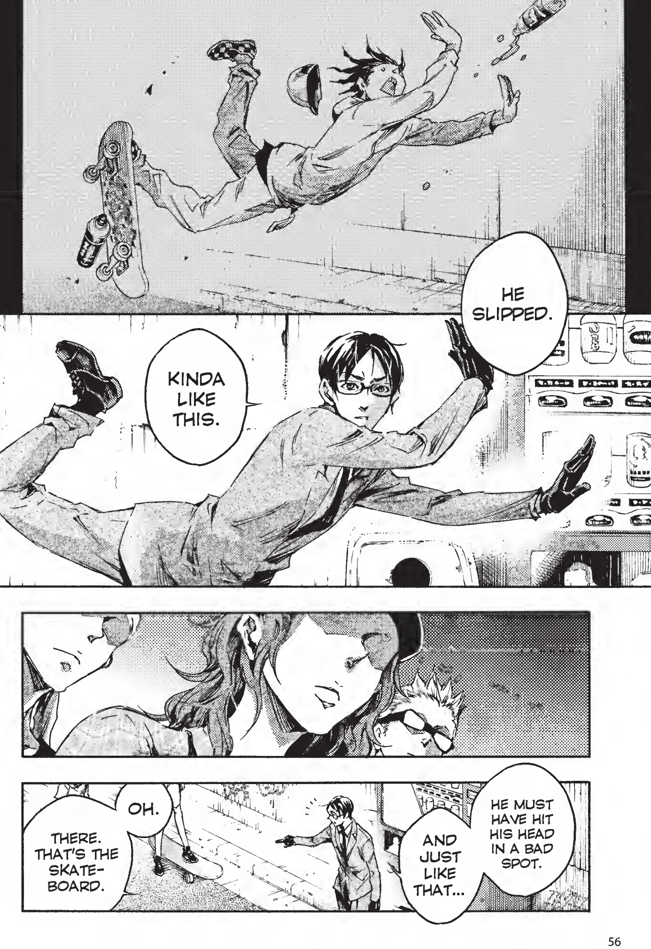

RESTAURANT
Danny's.
RESTAU
CLATTER

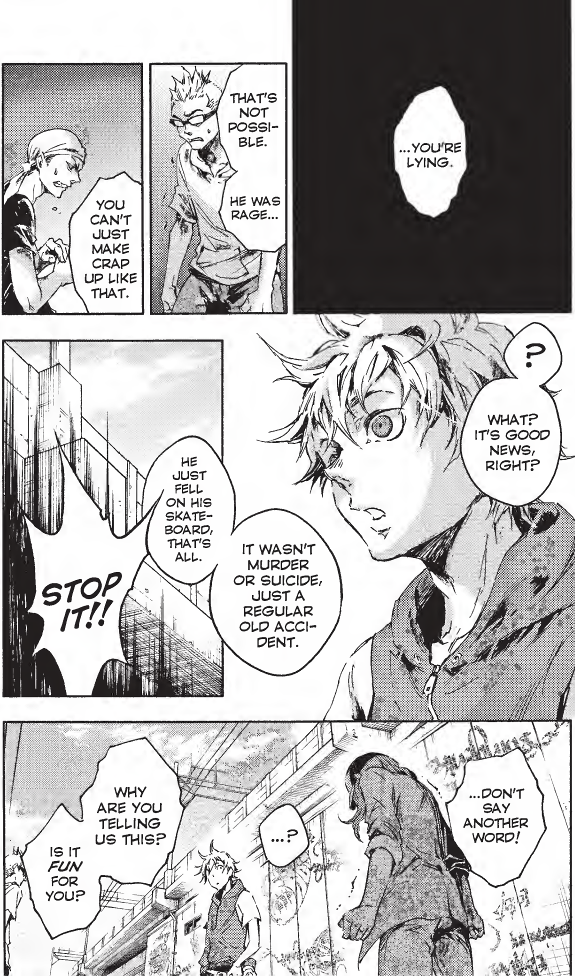

READ THE MEMORIES IN THIS PSYCHOLITH.
WHAT?
I finally find you, and...
WHY ARE YOU GOING OFF AND WORKING WITHOUT ME?!
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO THAT.
APPARENTLY HE'S A LEGEND.
THEY'RE UPSET BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW HOW HE DIED, SO I FIGURED I'D TELL THEM.
SLURP
TELL WHO?
HIS CREW.
...
OKAY, FINE.
fip...
CLATTER

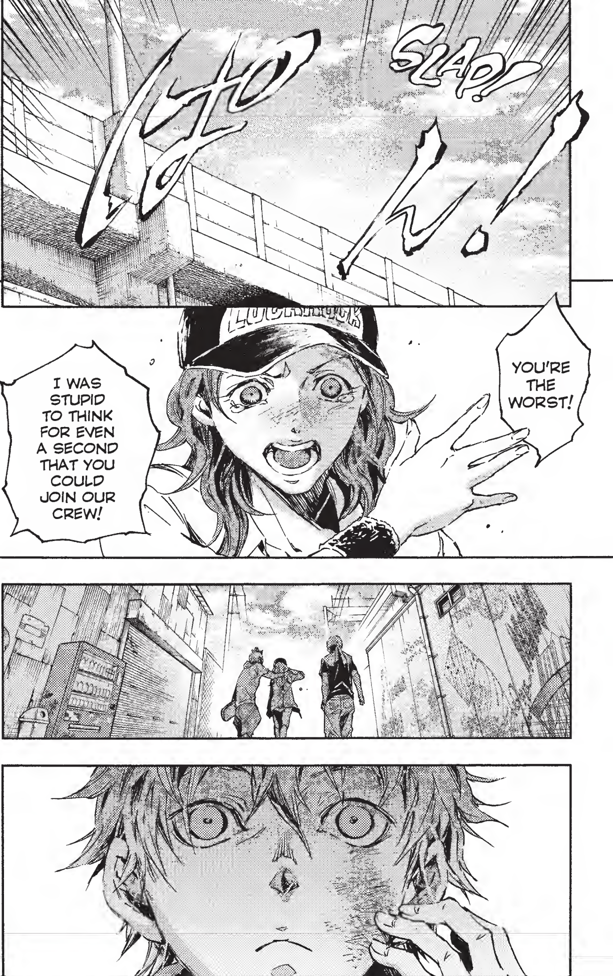

...!
...DAMN IT!
YOU GOT A LOT A GUTS SHOWING YOUR FACE HERE!
GRAB
ガシッ!
WHY ?!
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?!
?!
UH, UM...DID AMANO-KUN DO SOMETHING?

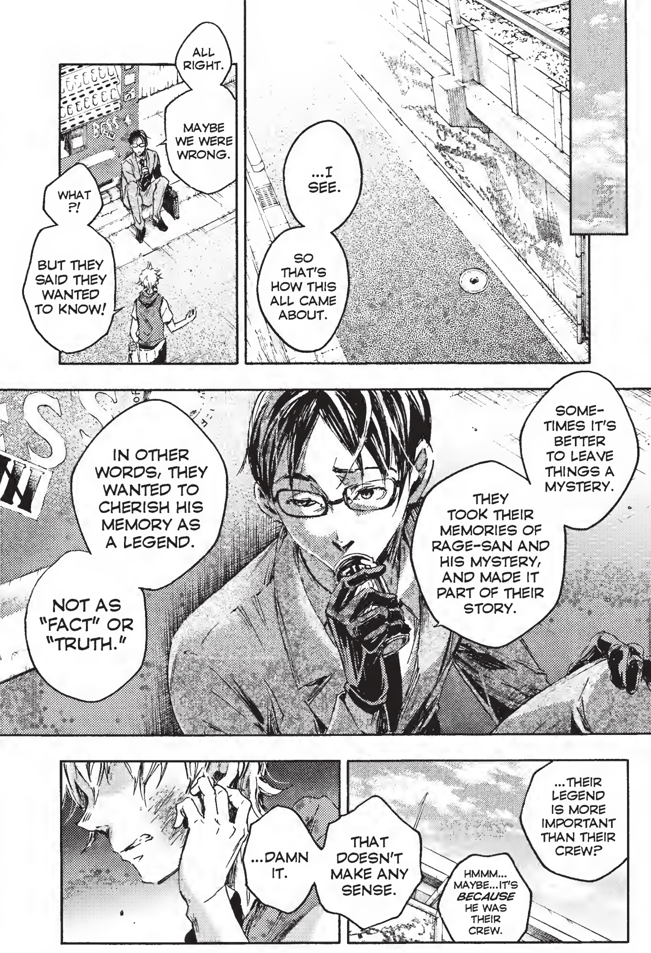

THIS AIN'T JUST "SOMETHING"! LOOK!
WELL, YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT RAGE'S DEATH, RIGHT?
HNGH ?!
I CAN'T FIND OUT UNLESS I CLEAN THE NEGATIVE POINT BY TAGGING IT.
GO ON, SAKURAI. TELL THEM WHAT HAPPENED.
HUH?
NO, BUT...
...THE HELL, DUDE!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR WEIRD CRAP.
WAIT A MINUTE, KŌJI!
STOMP

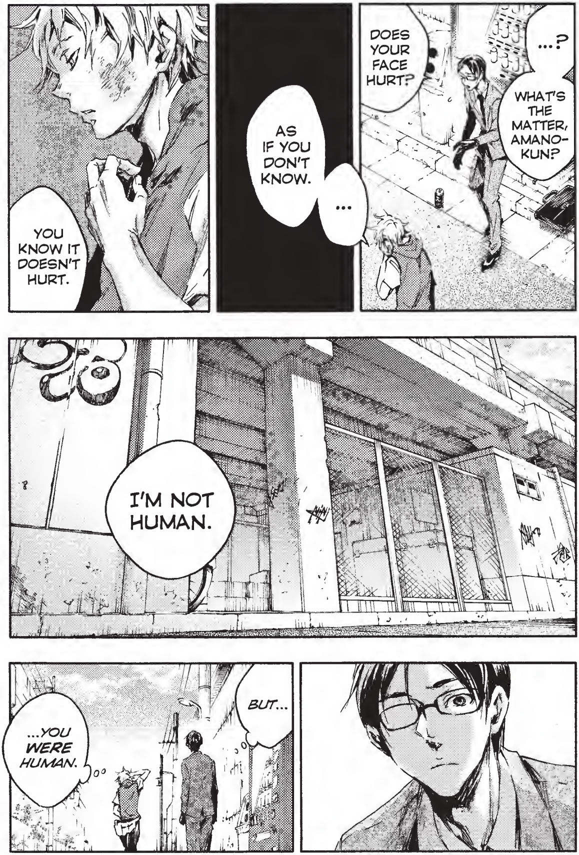

ARE YOU THE DETECTIVE HE TOLD US ABOUT?
DETECTIVE?
DO YOU...
...REALLY KNOW HOW RAGE DIED?
WELL...
YES.
That night, he was painting a picture.
Then he took a break, and right when he was about to get on his skateboard...

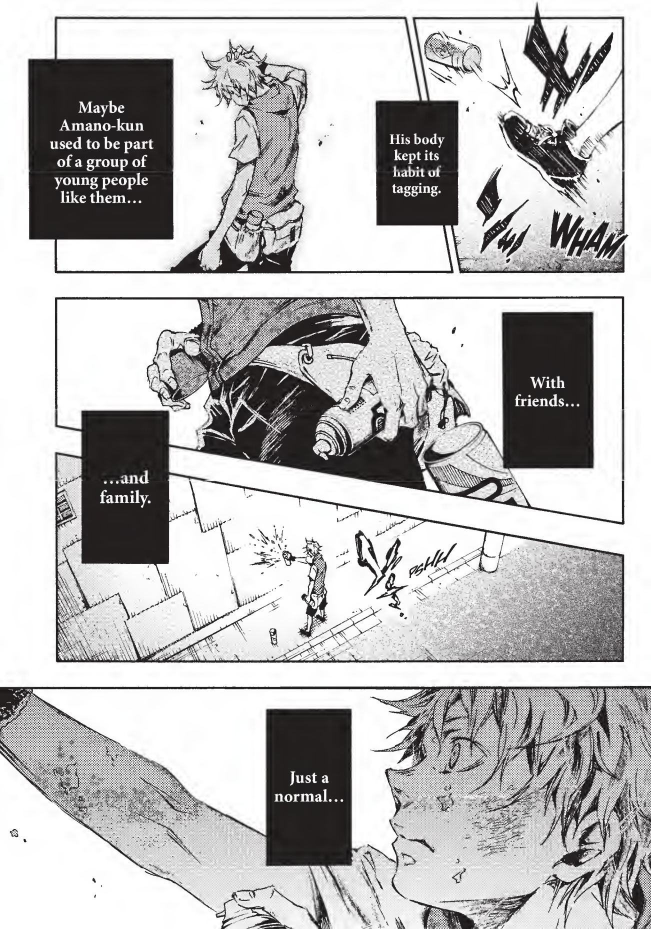

HE SLIPPED.
KINDA LIKE THIS.
HE MUST HAVE HIT HIS HEAD IN A BAD SPOT.
AND JUST LIKE THAT...
OH.
THERE. THAT'S THE SKATEBOARD.

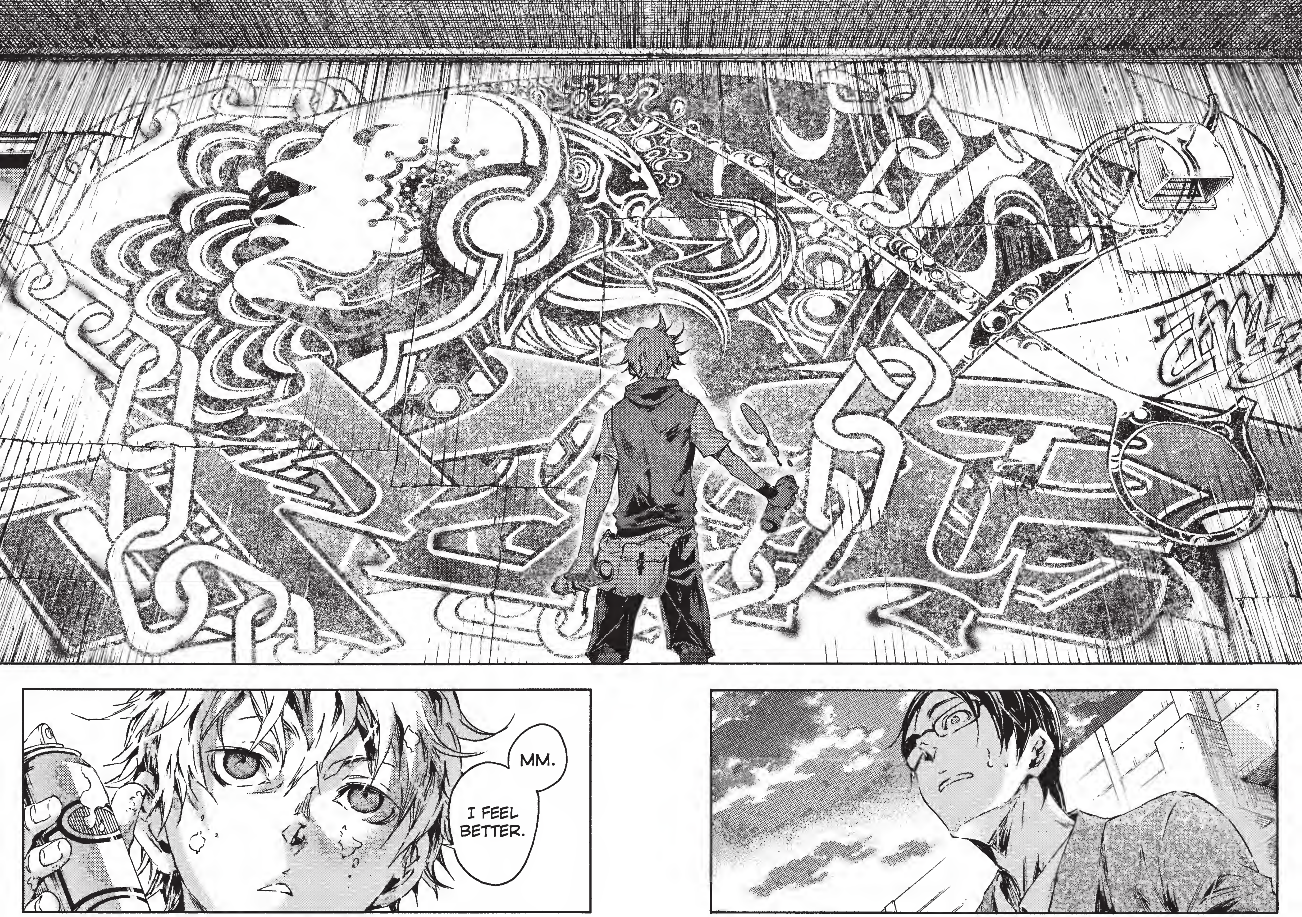

...YOU'RE LYING.
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE.
HE WAS RAGE...
YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE CRAP UP LIKE THAT.
?
WHAT? IT'S GOOD NEWS, RIGHT?
HE JUST FELL ON HIS SKATEBOARD, THAT'S ALL.
IT WASN'T MURDER OR SUICIDE, JUST A REGULAR OLD ACCIDENT.
STOP IT!!
...DON'T SAY ANOTHER WORD!
...?
WHY ARE YOU TELLING US THIS?
IS IT *FUN* FOR YOU?

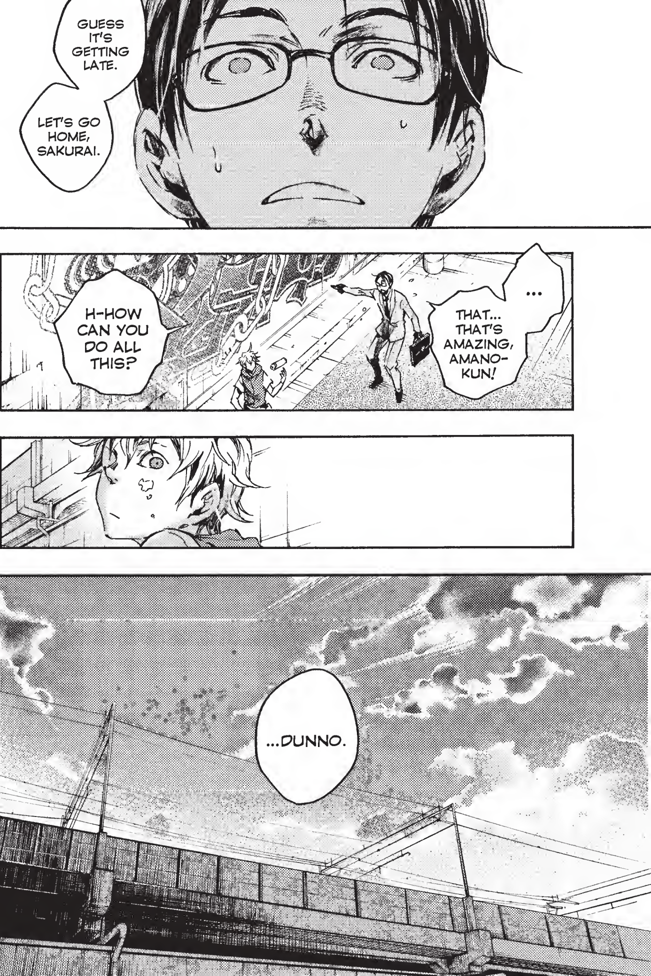

SLAP!
GON!
YOU'RE THE WORST!
I WAS STUPID TO THINK FOR EVEN A SECOND THAT YOU COULD JOIN OUR CREW!


...I SEE.
SO THAT'S HOW THIS ALL CAME ABOUT.
ALL RIGHT.
MAYBE WE WERE WRONG.
WHAT?!
BUT THEY SAID THEY WANTED TO KNOW!
SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER TO LEAVE THINGS A MYSTERY.
THEY TOOK THEIR MEMORIES OF RAGE-SAN AND HIS MYSTERY, AND MADE IT PART OF THEIR STORY.
IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WANTED TO CHERISH HIS MEMORY AS A LEGEND.
NOT AS "FACT" OR "TRUTH."
...THEIR LEGEND IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEIR CREW?
HMMM... MAYBE...IT'S *BECAUSE* HE WAS THEIR CREW.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
...DAMN IT.


...?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, AMANO-KUN?
DOES YOUR FACE HURT?
...
AS IF YOU DON'T KNOW.
YOU KNOW IT DOESN'T HURT.
I'M NOT HUMAN.
BUT...
...YOU WERE HUMAN.


His body kept its habit of tagging.
WHAM
Maybe Amano-kun used to be part of a group of young people like them…
With friends…
…and family.
PSHH
Just a normal…


MM.
I FEEL BETTER.


GUESS IT'S GETTING LATE.
LET'S GO HOME, SAKURAI.
...
THAT... THAT'S AMAZING, AMANO-KUN!
H-HOW CAN YOU DO ALL THIS?
...DUNNO.

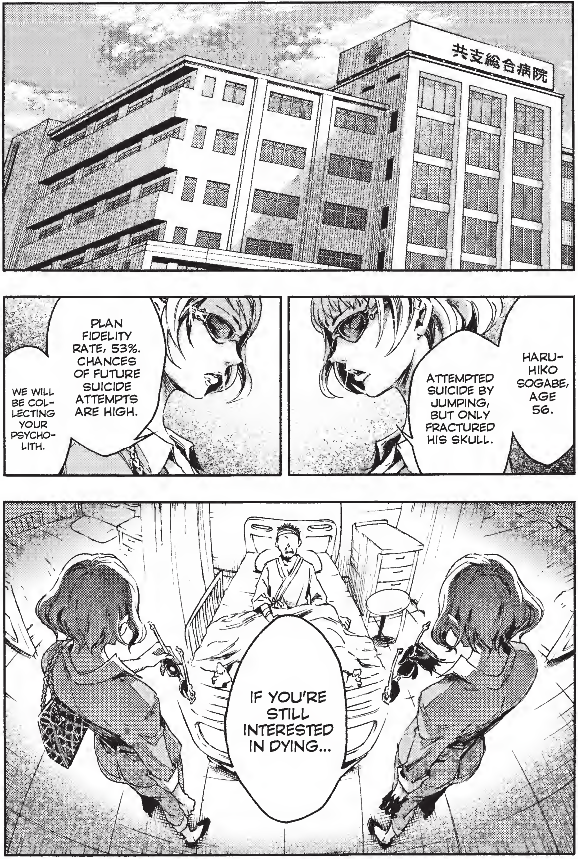
The six stories that appear in this volume are all very different from each other in an especially good way, and I had a lot of fun turning them into manga. You can really feel how Maekawa-san's idea of "the what-ifs of reality" is expanding our view of the world. I hope you can enjoy it with me.

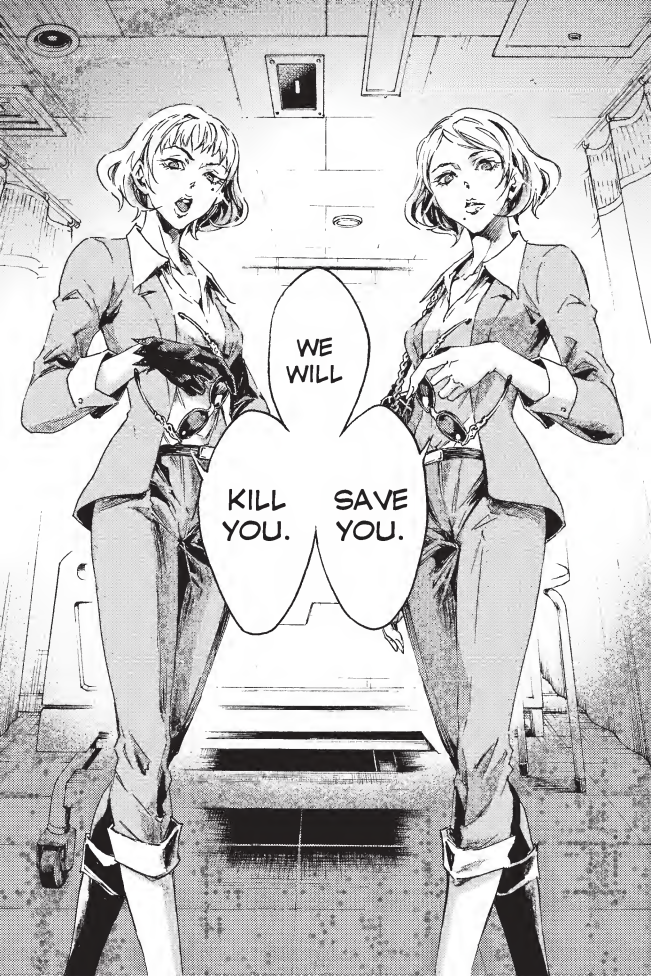
Jinsei Kataoka

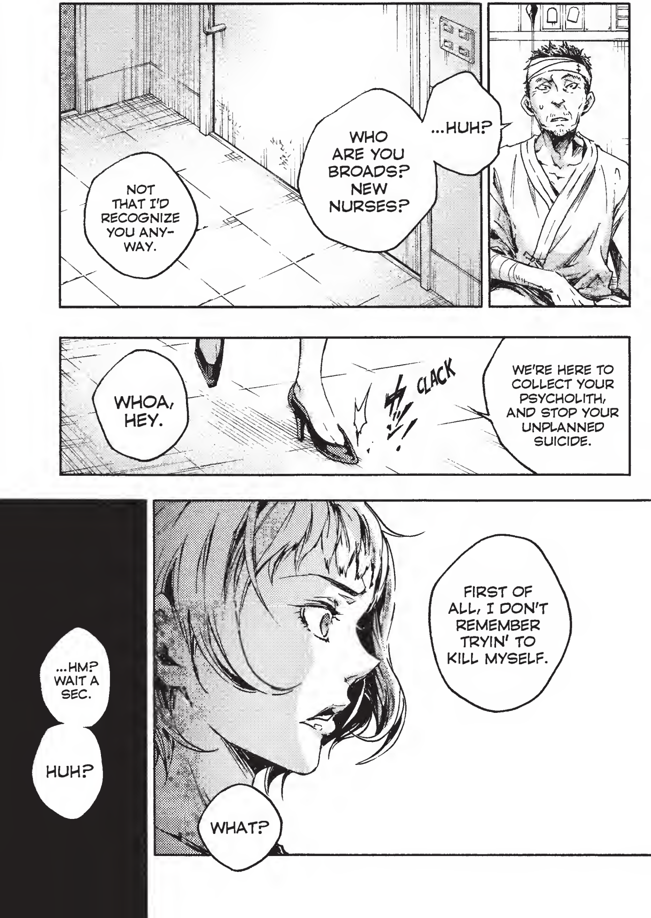
Somehow or another, Livingstone has reached volume three. Because the story's theme is souls, I'd wondered if it was gonna be some kind of preachy, religious manga? Maybe a spiritual manga? Or horror? But I feel like in the end, it turned out to be a strange, mysterious manga that doesn't fit into any of those categories.

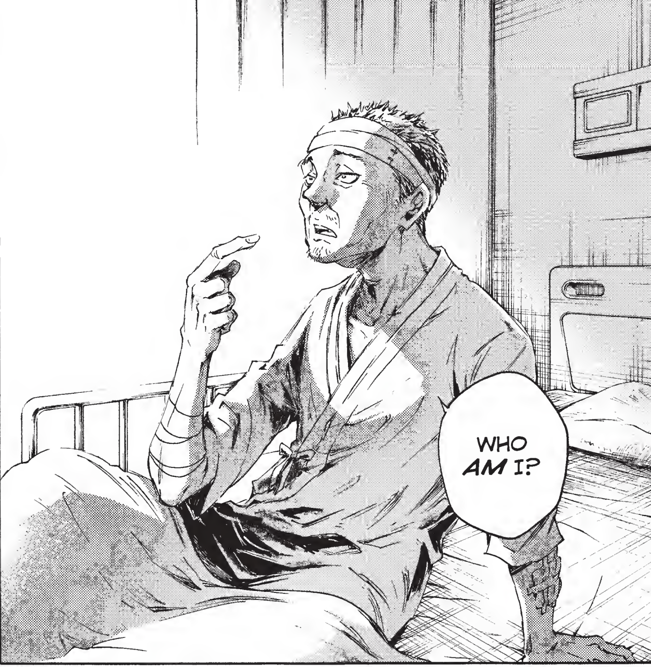
Chapter 14 ✚ A Broken Family

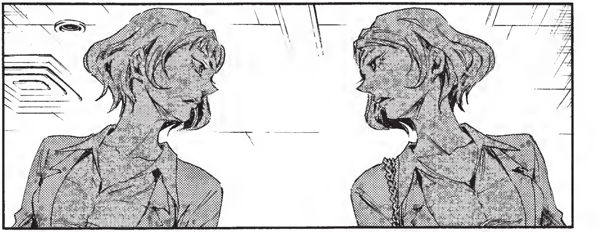
SIGN: Kyōshi General Hospital

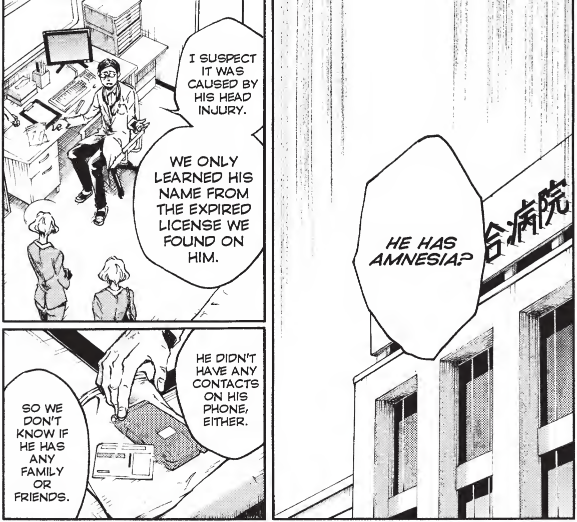

共支総合病院
HARUHIKO SOGABE, AGE 56.
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE BY JUMPING, BUT ONLY FRACTURED HIS SKULL.
PLAN FIDELITY RATE, 53%. CHANCES OF FUTURE SUICIDE ATTEMPTS ARE HIGH.
WE WILL BE COLLECTING YOUR PSYCHOLITH.
IF YOU'RE STILL INTERESTED IN DYING...


WE WILL
SAVE YOU.
KILL YOU.

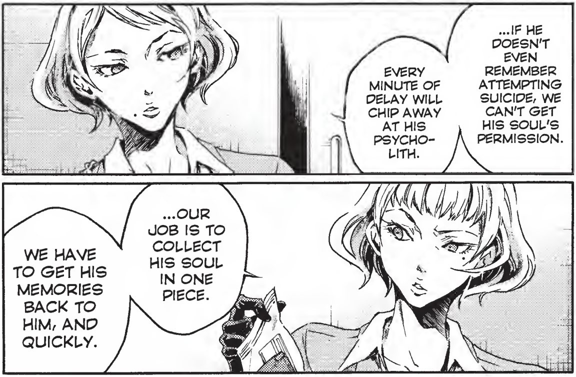

...HUH?
WHO ARE YOU BROADS? NEW NURSES?
NOT THAT I'D RECOGNIZE YOU ANYWAY.
WE'RE HERE TO COLLECT YOUR PSYCHOLITH, AND STOP YOUR UNPLANNED SUICIDE.
CLACK
WHOA, HEY.
FIRST OF ALL, I DON'T REMEMBER TRYIN' TO KILL MYSELF.
WHAT?
...HM? WAIT A SEC.
HUH?

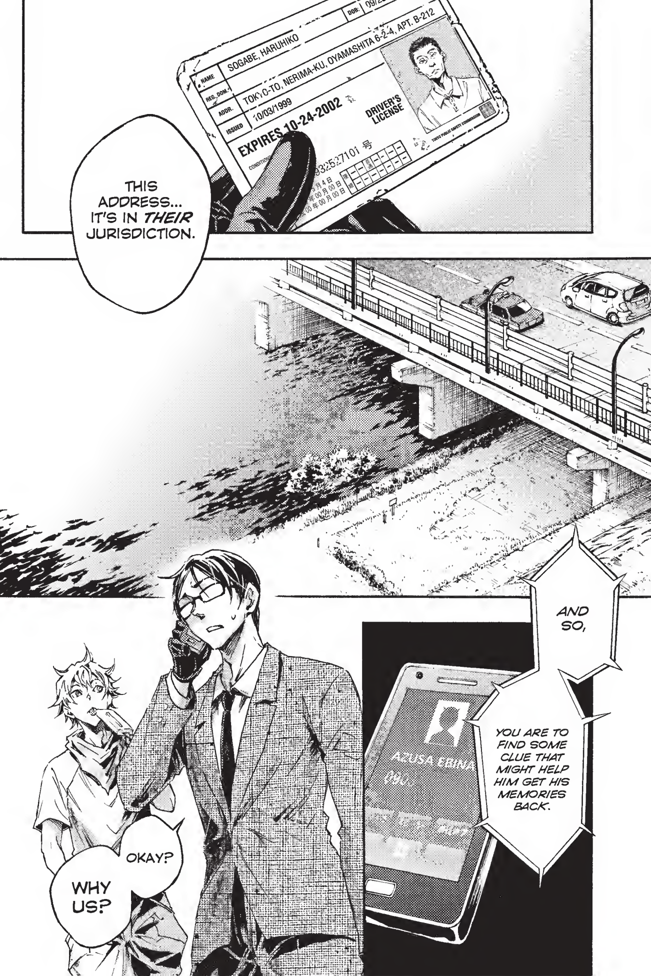

WHO *AM* I?

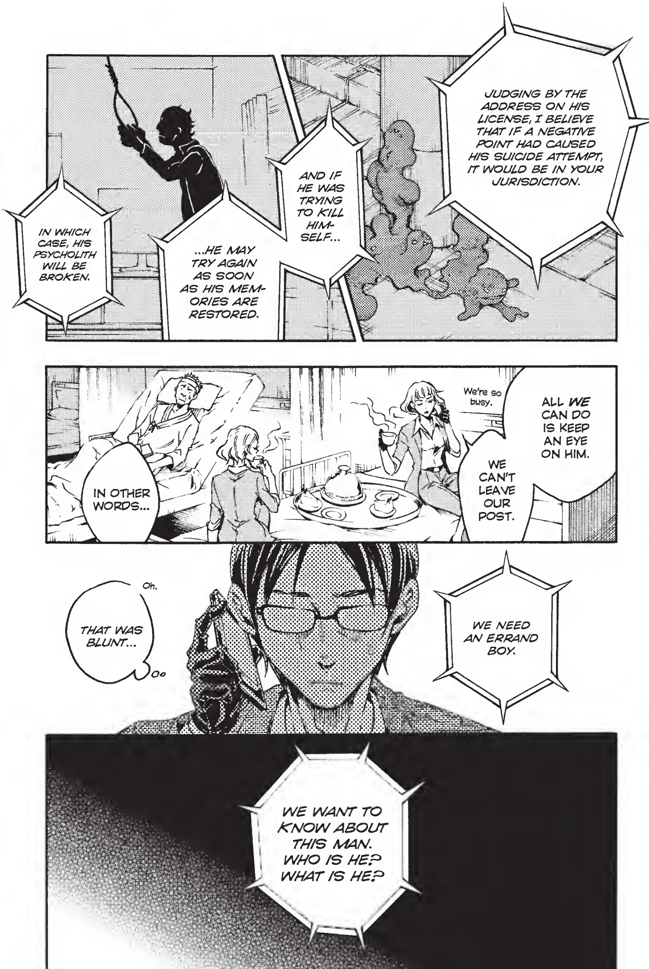


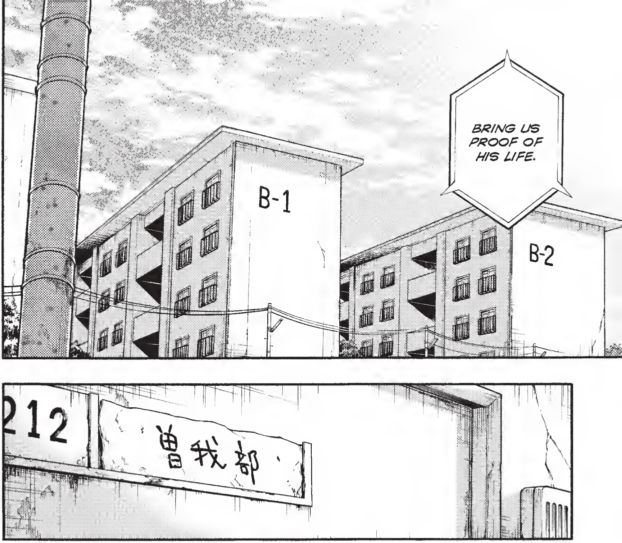

HE HAS AMNESIA?
I SUSPECT IT WAS CAUSED BY HIS HEAD INJURY.
WE ONLY LEARNED HIS NAME FROM THE EXPIRED LICENSE WE FOUND ON HIM.
HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONTACTS ON HIS PHONE, EITHER.
SO WE DON'T KNOW IF HE HAS ANY FAMILY OR FRIENDS.

SIGN: General Hospital

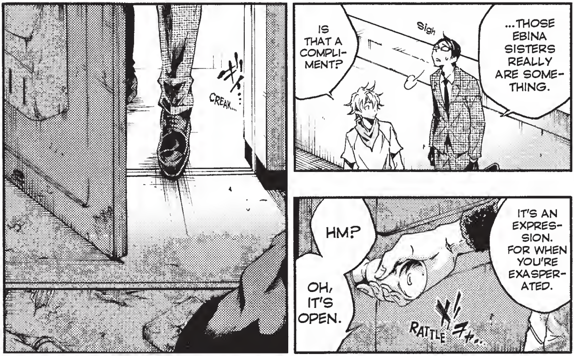

...IF HE DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER ATTEMPTING SUICIDE, WE CAN'T GET HIS SOUL'S PERMISSION.
EVERY MINUTE OF DELAY WILL CHIP AWAY AT HIS PSYCHOLITH.
...OUR JOB IS TO COLLECT HIS SOUL IN ONE PIECE.
WE HAVE TO GET HIS MEMORIES BACK TO HIM, AND QUICKLY.

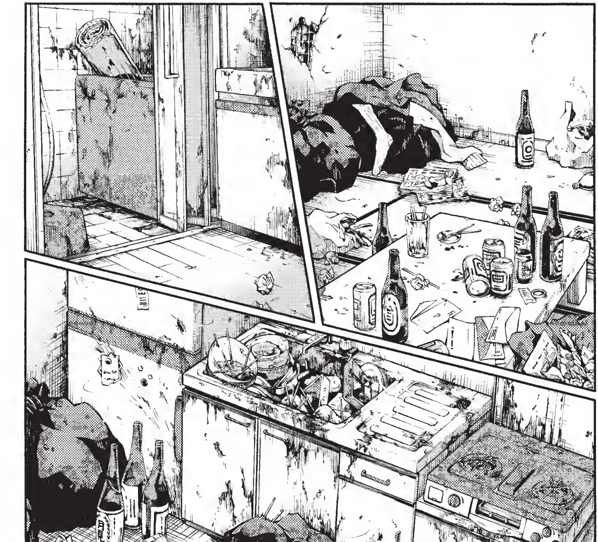

NAME SOGABE, HARUHIKO
DOB: 09/2
REG. DOM.
ADDR. TOKYO-TO, NERIMA-KU, OYAMASHITA 6-2-4, APT. B-212
ISSUED 10/03/1999
EXPIRES 10-24-2002
DRIVER'S LICENSE
CONDITIONS
932527101 号
TOKYO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
THIS ADDRESS... IT'S IN *THEIR* JURISDICTION.
AND SO,
AZUSA EBINA
YOU ARE TO FIND SOME CLUE THAT MIGHT HELP HIM GET HIS MEMORIES BACK.
OKAY?
WHY US?

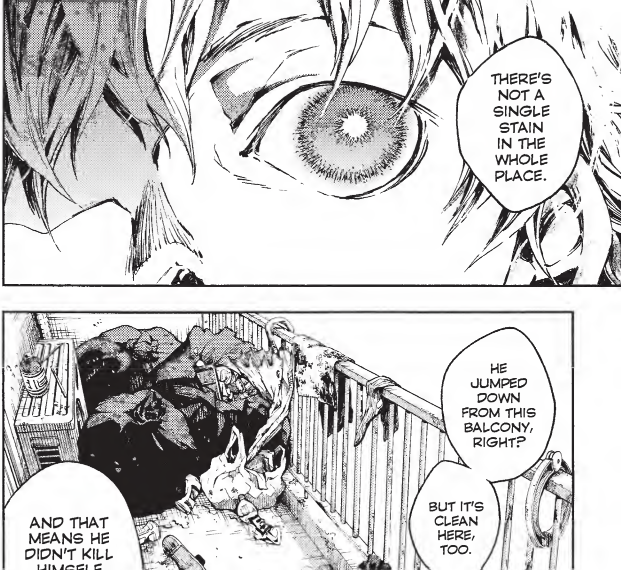

JUDGING BY THE ADDRESS ON HIS LICENSE, I BELIEVE THAT IF A NEGATIVE POINT HAD CAUSED HIS SUICIDE ATTEMPT, IT WOULD BE IN YOUR JURISDICTION.
AND IF HE WAS TRYING TO KILL HIMSELF...
...HE MAY TRY AGAIN AS SOON AS HIS MEMORIES ARE RESTORED.
IN WHICH CASE, HIS PSYCHOLITH WILL BE BROKEN.
We're so busy.
ALL WE CAN DO IS KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.
WE CAN'T LEAVE OUR POST.
IN OTHER WORDS...
WE NEED AN ERRAND BOY.
Oh.
THAT WAS BLUNT...
WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MAN. WHO IS HE? WHAT IS HE?

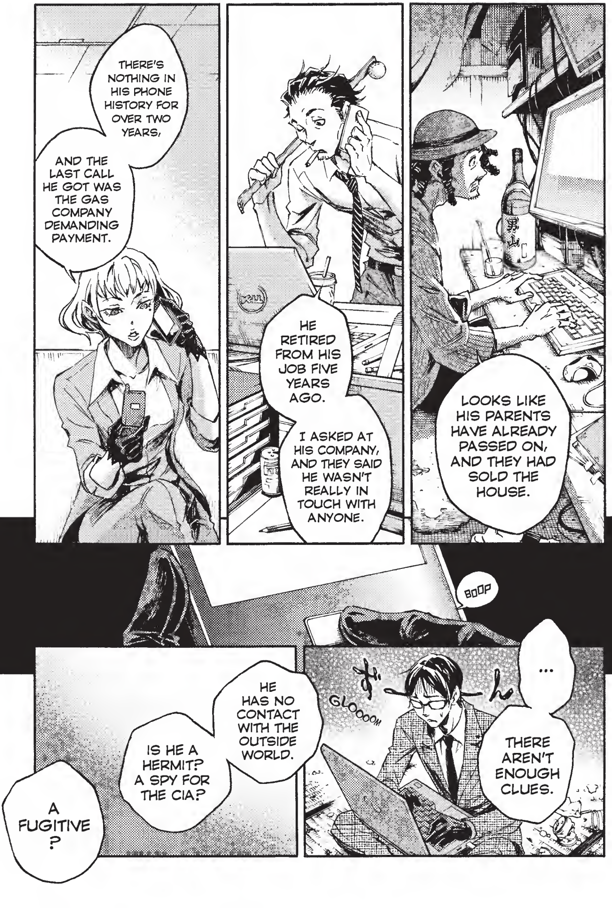

BRING US PROOF OF HIS LIFE.
B-1
B-2
212
曽我部

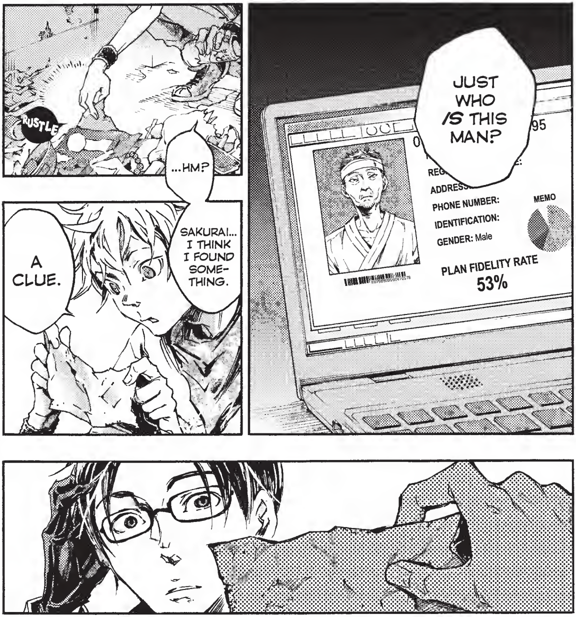
NAMEPLATE: Sogabe


...THOSE EBINA SISTERS REALLY ARE SOMETHING.
Sigh
IS THAT A COMPLIMENT?
IT'S AN EXPRESSION. FOR WHEN YOU'RE EXASPERATED.
HM?
OH, IT'S OPEN.
ガチャ.. RATTLE
ギィ... CREAK...

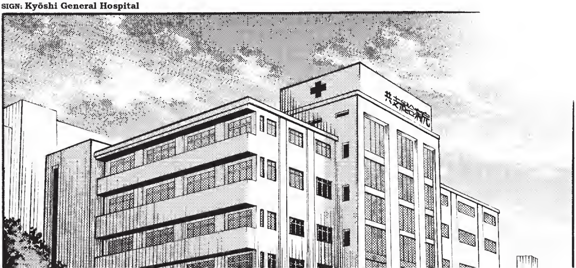

...WHOA.
Pee-yew.
IT'S FILTHY.
NO...
IT'S TOTALLY CLEAN.
WHAT?

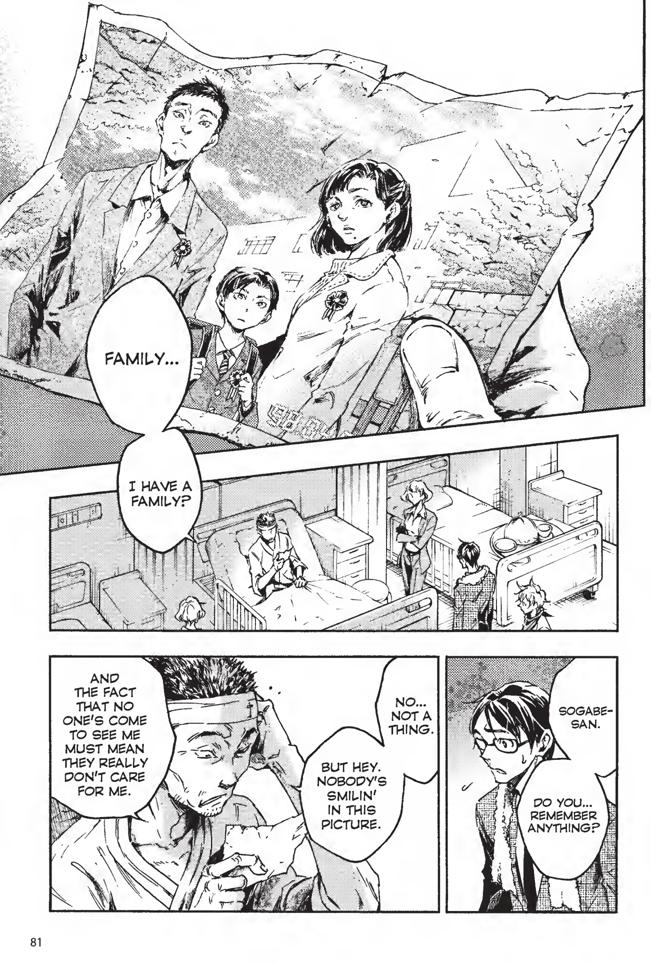

THERE'S NOT A SINGLE STAIN IN THE WHOLE PLACE.
HE JUMPED DOWN FROM THIS BALCONY, RIGHT?
BUT IT'S CLEAN HERE, TOO.
AND THAT MEANS HE DIDN'T KILL HIMSELF BECAUSE OF A NEGATIVE POINT.
...WE CAN'T FOLLOW THE STAIN-BEASTS.
AND THERE'S NOTHING HERE BUT TRASH.
Hmmm
I GUESS WE'LL LOOK INTO HIS ASSOCIATES...
search
TA
Tokieda
Toba Industries
Towada
NA
Nadzuka
Nasuo
BEEP
BEEP

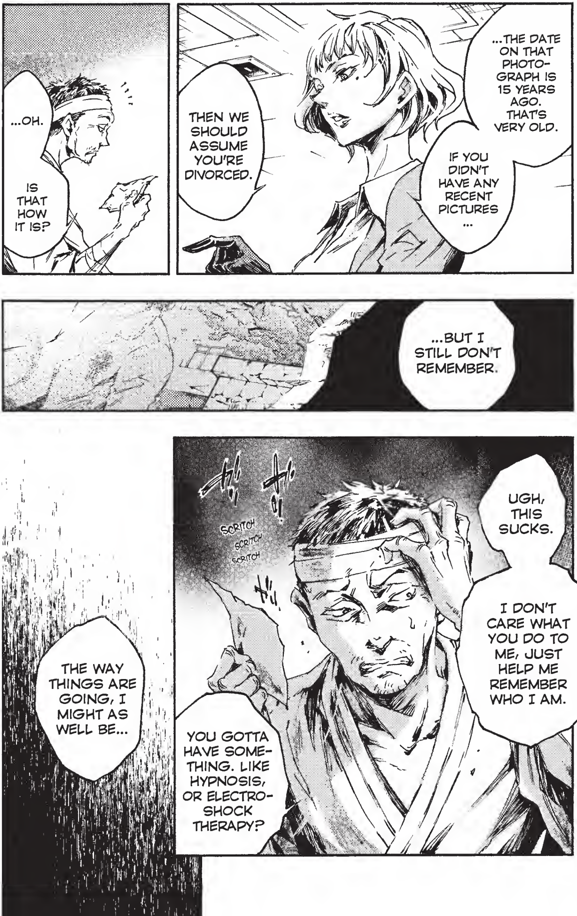

LOOKS LIKE HIS PARENTS HAVE ALREADY PASSED ON, AND THEY HAD SOLD THE HOUSE.
HE RETIRED FROM HIS JOB FIVE YEARS AGO.
I ASKED AT HIS COMPANY, AND THEY SAID HE WASN'T REALLY IN TOUCH WITH ANYONE.
THERE'S NOTHING IN HIS PHONE HISTORY FOR OVER TWO YEARS,
AND THE LAST CALL HE GOT WAS THE GAS COMPANY DEMANDING PAYMENT.
BOOP
...
GLOOOOOM
THERE AREN'T ENOUGH CLUES.
HE HAS NO CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
IS HE A HERMIT? A SPY FOR THE CIA?
A FUGITIVE?

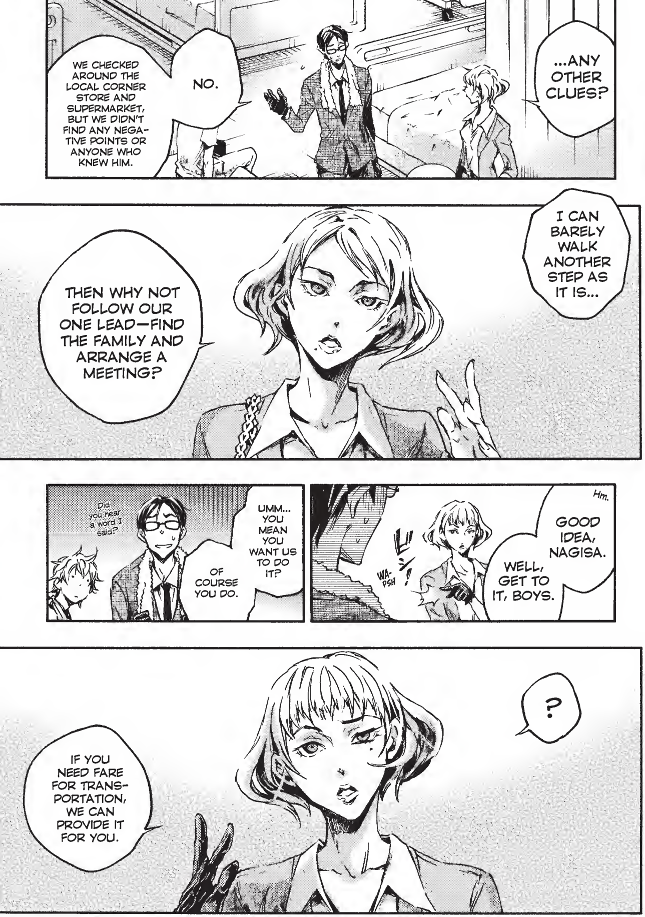

JUST WHO *IS* THIS MAN?
95
0
REG
ADDRESS
PHONE NUMBER:
IDENTIFICATION:
GENDER: Male
MEMO
PLAN FIDELITY RATE
53%
RUSTLE
...HM?
SAKURAI... I THINK I FOUND SOMETHING.
A CLUE.

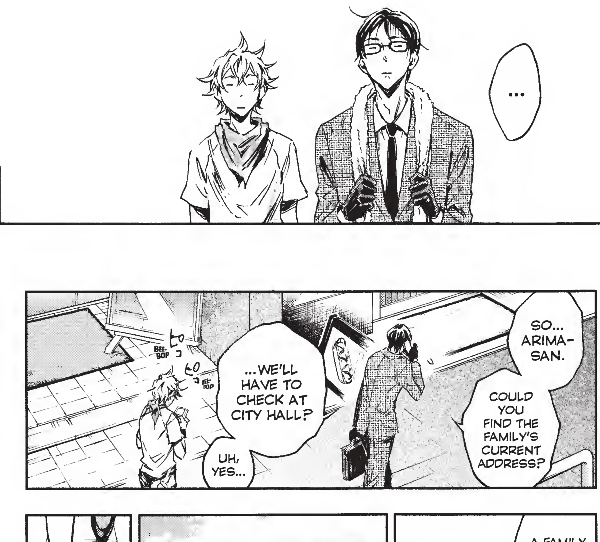
SIGN: Kyōshi General Hospital

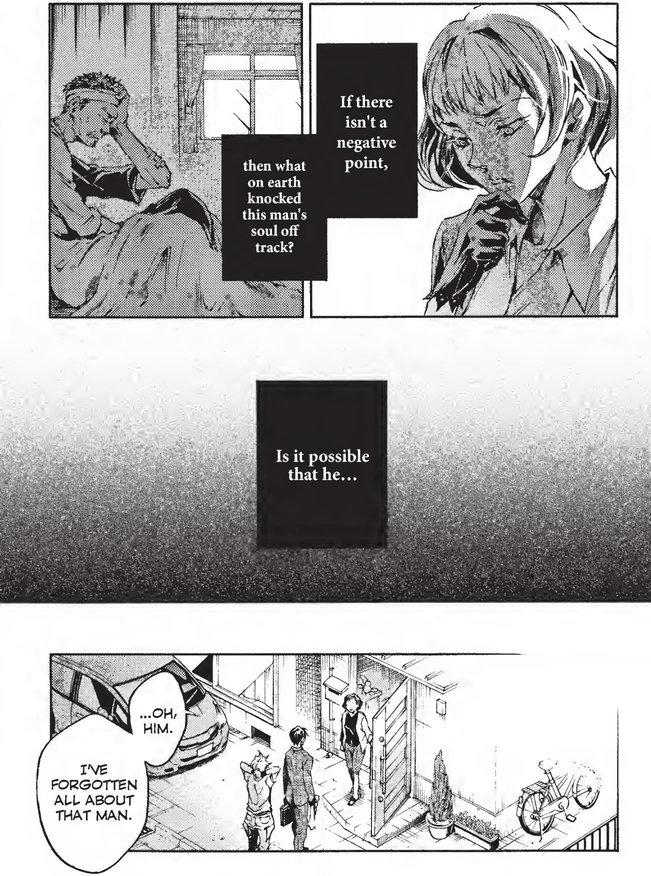


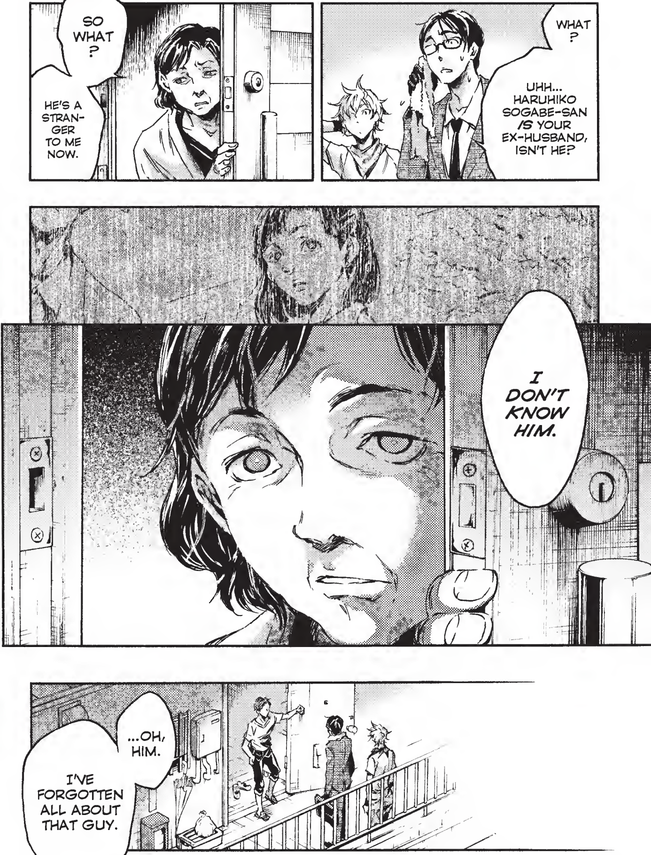

FAMILY...
I HAVE A FAMILY?
SOGABE-SAN.
DO YOU... REMEMBER ANYTHING?
NO... NOT A THING.
BUT HEY. NOBODY'S SMILIN' IN THIS PICTURE.
AND THE FACT THAT NO ONE'S COME TO SEE ME MUST MEAN THEY REALLY DON'T CARE FOR ME.

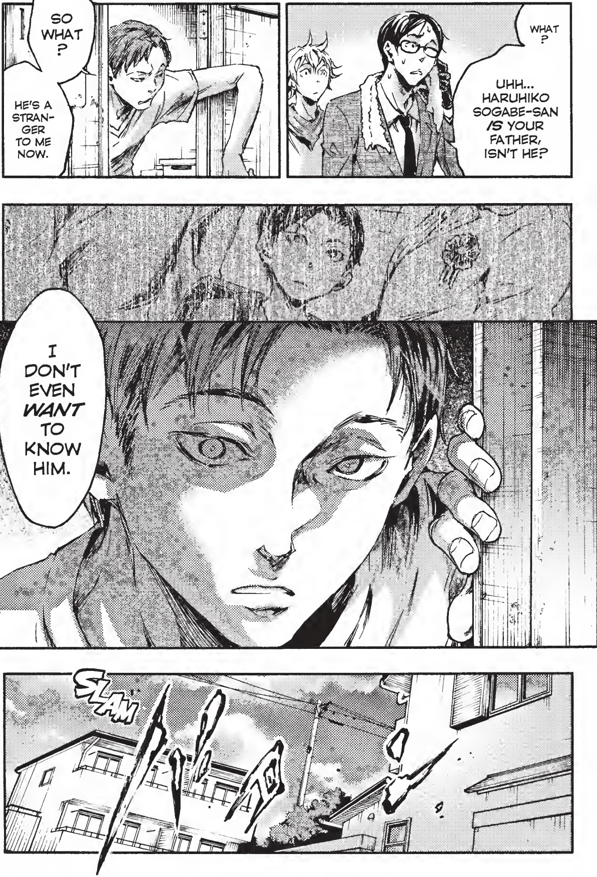

...THE DATE ON THAT PHOTOGRAPH IS 15 YEARS AGO. THAT'S VERY OLD.
IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY RECENT PICTURES...
THEN WE SHOULD ASSUME YOU'RE DIVORCED.
...OH.
IS THAT HOW IT IS?
...BUT I STILL DON'T REMEMBER.
UGH, THIS SUCKS.
SCRITCH SCRITCH SCRITCH
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO TO ME, JUST HELP ME REMEMBER WHO I AM.
YOU GOTTA HAVE SOMETHING. LIKE HYPNOSIS, OR ELECTROSHOCK THERAPY?
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, I MIGHT AS WELL BE...

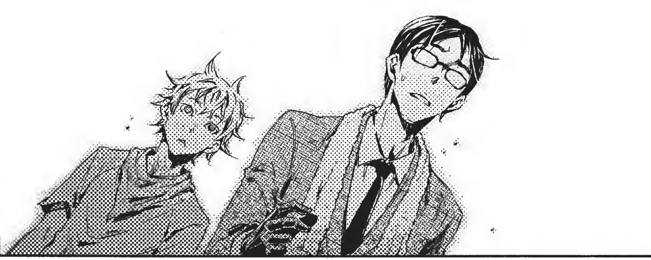

...ANY OTHER CLUES?
NO.
WE CHECKED AROUND THE LOCAL CORNER STORE AND SUPERMARKET, BUT WE DIDN'T FIND ANY NEGATIVE POINTS OR ANYONE WHO KNEW HIM.
I CAN BARELY WALK ANOTHER STEP AS IT IS...
THEN WHY NOT FOLLOW OUR ONE LEAD—FIND THE FAMILY AND ARRANGE A MEETING?
Hm.
GOOD IDEA, NAGISA.
WELL, GET TO IT, BOYS.
WA-PSH
UMM... YOU MEAN YOU WANT US TO DO IT?
OF COURSE YOU DO.
Did you hear a word I said?
?
IF YOU NEED FARE FOR TRANSPORTATION, WE CAN PROVIDE IT FOR YOU.


...
SO... ARIMA-SAN.
COULD YOU FIND THE FAMILY'S CURRENT ADDRESS?
...WE'LL HAVE TO CHECK AT CITY HALL?
UH, YES...
BEE-BOP
BEE-BOP
A FAMILY FROM A PICTURE WE FOUND IN THE TRASH.
I DUNNO ABOUT THIS...
CLACK
...

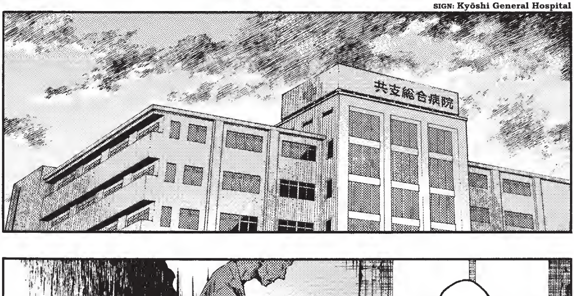

If there isn't a negative point,
then what on earth knocked this man's soul off track?
Is it possible that he…
...OH, HIM.
I'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THAT MAN.

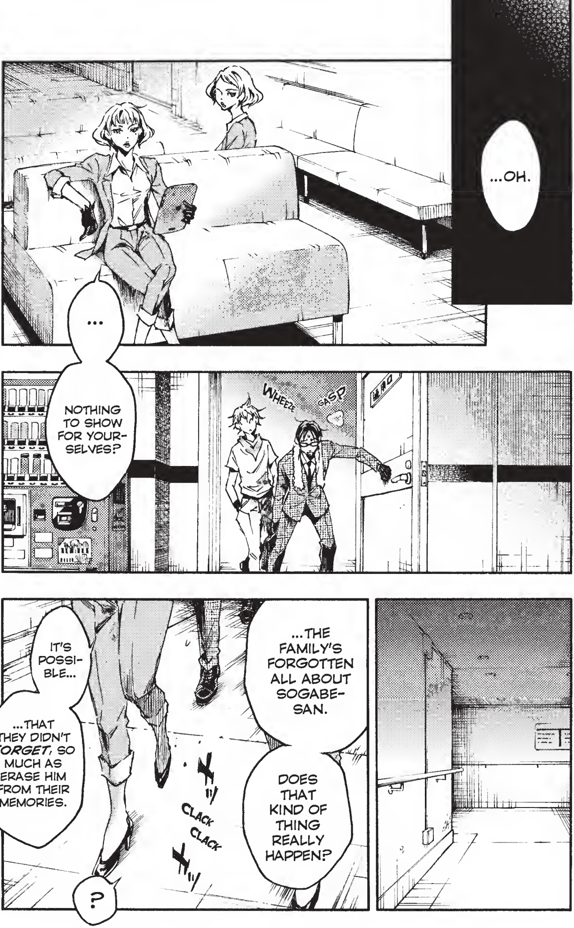

WHAT?
UHH... HARUHIKO SOGABE-SAN *IS* YOUR EX-HUSBAND, ISN'T HE?
SO WHAT?
HE'S A STRANGER TO ME NOW.
I DON'T KNOW HIM.
...OH, HIM.
I'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THAT GUY.

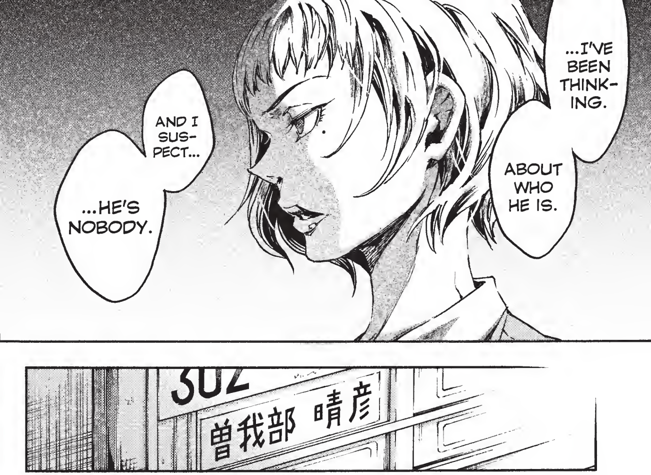

WHAT ?
UHH... HARUHIKO SOGABE-SAN *IS* YOUR FATHER, ISN'T HE?
SO WHAT ?
HE'S A STRANGER TO ME NOW.
I DON'T EVEN *WANT* TO KNOW HIM.
SLAM



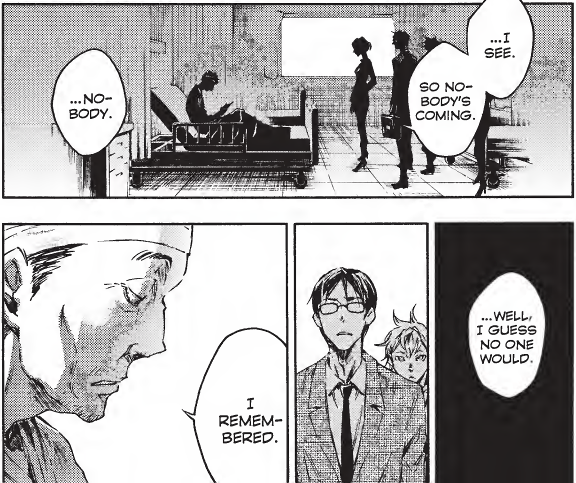
SIGN: Kyōshi General Hospital

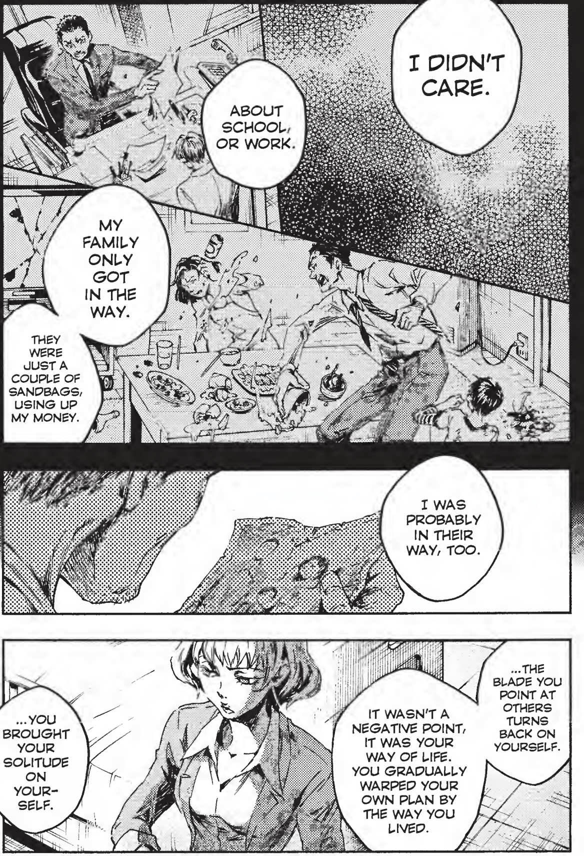

共支総合病院
OH.
THIS IS... SHIGEMI?
AND... NOBUNAGA.

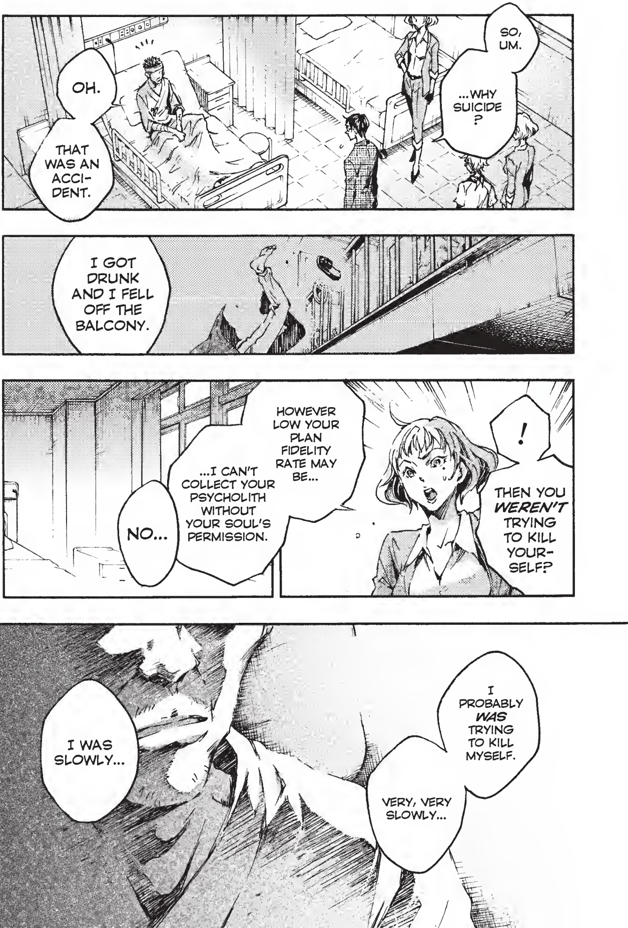

...OH.
...
NOTHING TO SHOW FOR YOURSELVES?
WHEEZE
GASP
...THE FAMILY'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT SOGABE-SAN.
DOES THAT KIND OF THING REALLY HAPPEN?
IT'S POSSIBLE...
...THAT THEY DIDN'T *FORGET*, SO MUCH AS ERASE HIM FROM THEIR MEMORIES.
CLACK
CLACK
?

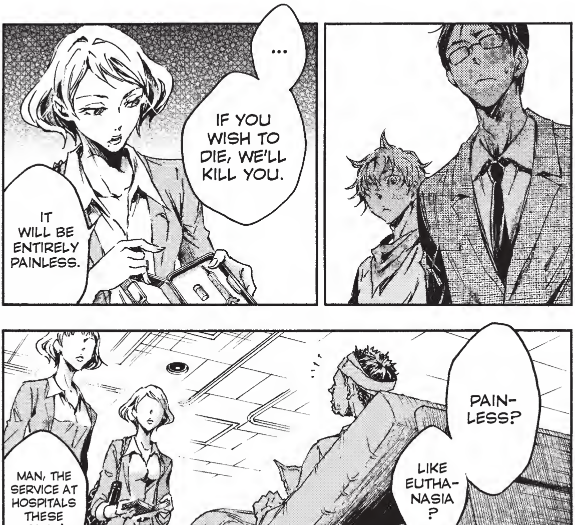

...I'VE BEEN THINKING.
ABOUT WHO HE IS.
AND I SUSPECT...
...HE'S NOBODY.
302
曽我部 晴彦

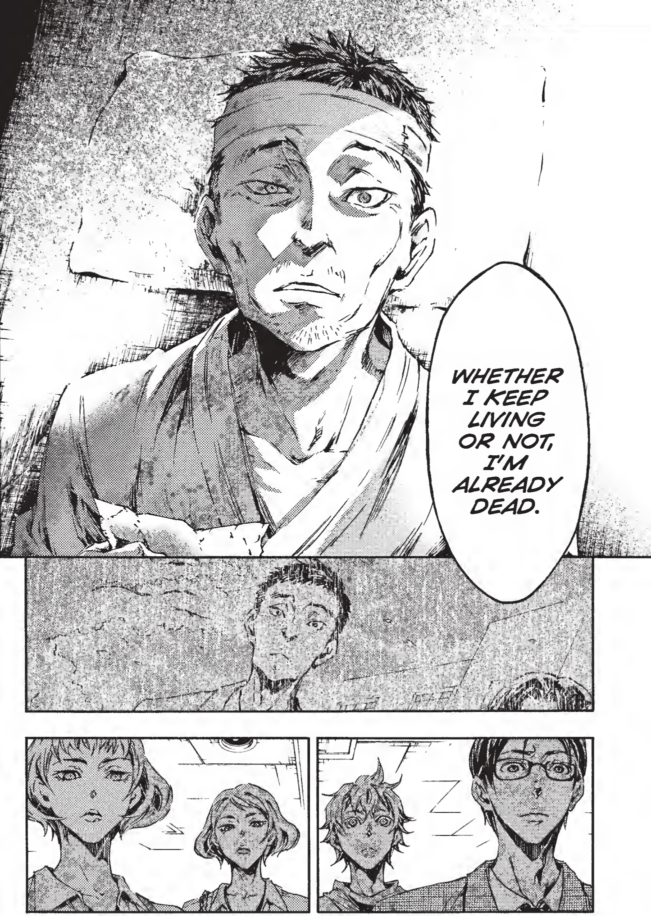
NAMEPLATE: Haruhiko Sogabe

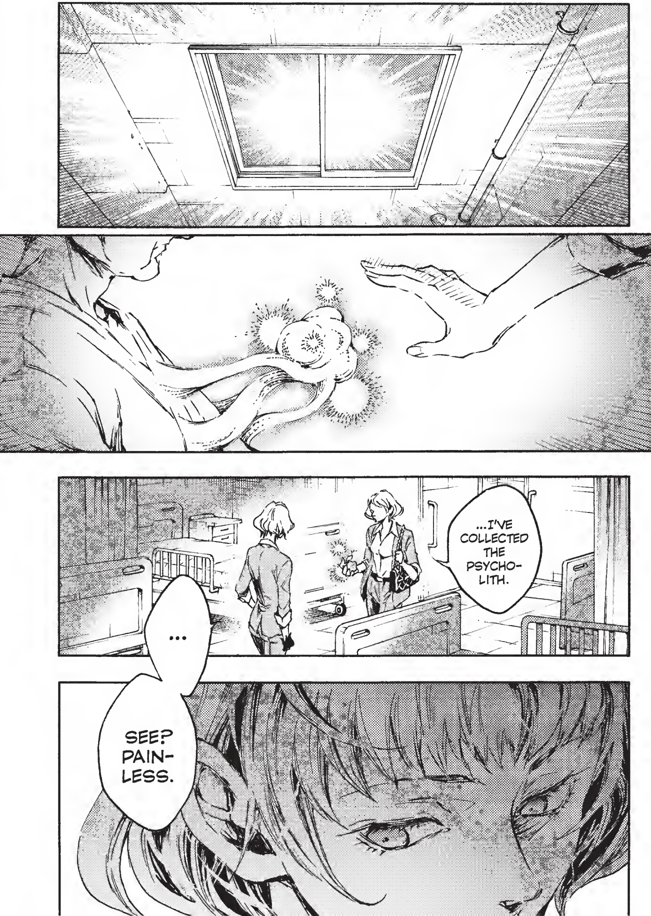

...I SEE.
SO NOBODY'S COMING.
...NOBODY.
...WELL, I GUESS NO ONE WOULD.
I REMEMBERED.

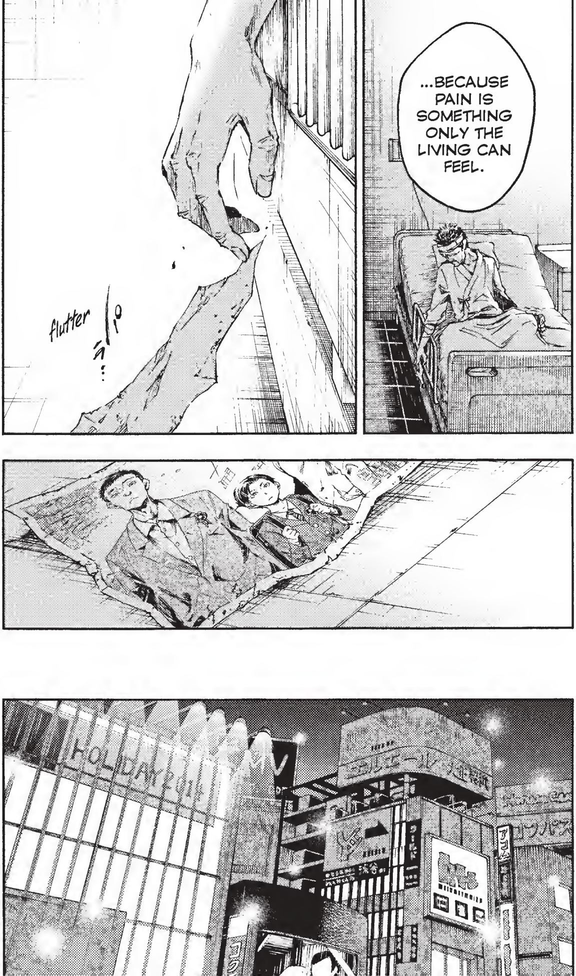

I DIDN'T CARE.
ABOUT SCHOOL, OR WORK.
MY FAMILY ONLY GOT IN THE WAY.
THEY WERE JUST A COUPLE OF SANDBAGS, USING UP MY MONEY.
I WAS PROBABLY IN THEIR WAY, TOO.
...THE BLADE YOU POINT AT OTHERS TURNS BACK ON YOURSELF.
IT WASN'T A NEGATIVE POINT, IT WAS YOUR WAY OF LIFE. YOU GRADUALLY WARPED YOUR OWN PLAN BY THE WAY YOU LIVED.
...YOU BROUGHT YOUR SOLITUDE ON YOURSELF.

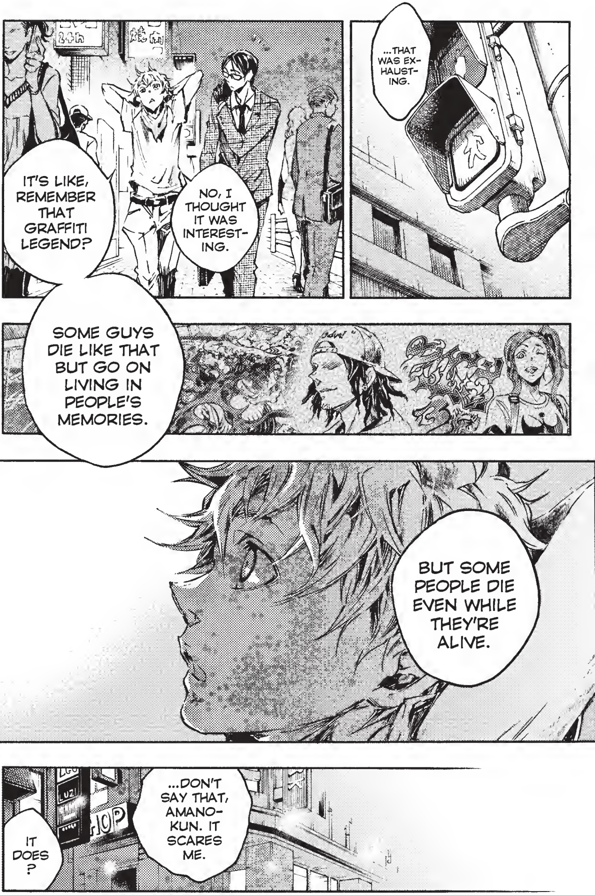

SO, UM.
...WHY SUICIDE?
OH.
THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
I GOT DRUNK AND I FELL OFF THE BALCONY.
!
THEN YOU *WEREN'T* TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF?
HOWEVER LOW YOUR PLAN FIDELITY RATE MAY BE...
...I CAN'T COLLECT YOUR PSYCHOLITH WITHOUT YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION.
NO...
I PROBABLY *WAS* TRYING TO KILL MYSELF.
VERY, VERY SLOWLY...
I WAS SLOWLY...

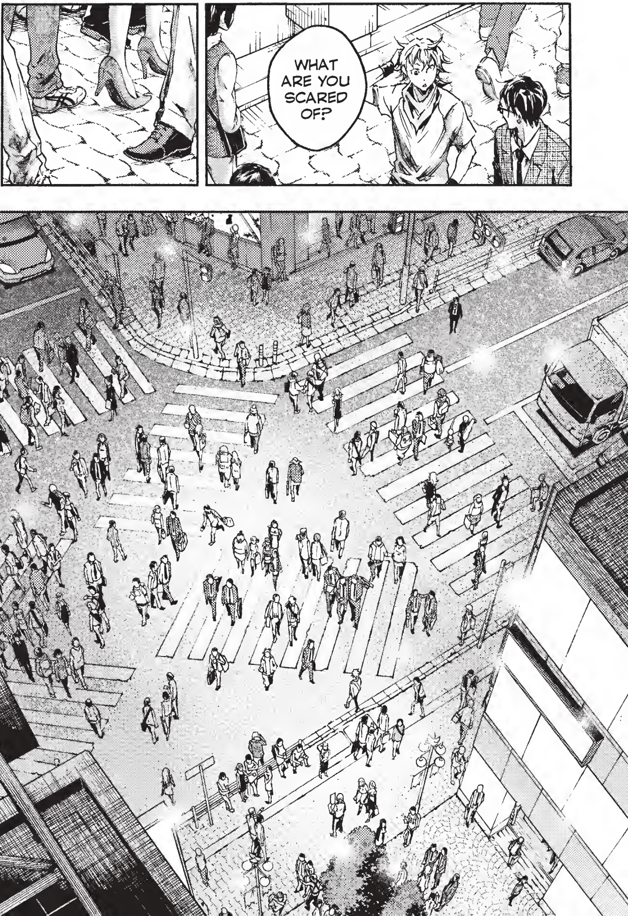

...
IF YOU WISH TO DIE, WE'LL KILL YOU.
IT WILL BE ENTIRELY PAINLESS.
PAINLESS?
LIKE EUTHANASIA?
MAN, THE SERVICE AT HOSPITALS THESE DAYS!
YOU MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU'RE NOT OPPOSED TO DYING.
...MAY WE HAVE YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION?
Ha ha!
PERMISSION, SHMERMISSION.


WHETHER I KEEP LIVING OR NOT, I'M ALREADY DEAD.

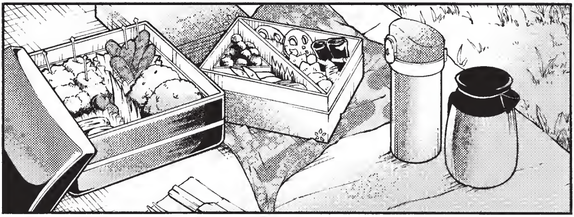

...I'VE COLLECTED THE PSYCHOLITH.
...
SEE? PAINLESS.

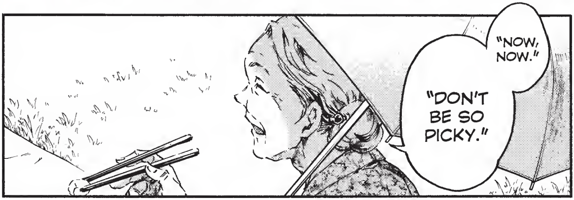

...BECAUSE PAIN IS SOMETHING ONLY THE LIVING CAN FEEL.
flutter
パラ…
HOLIDAY

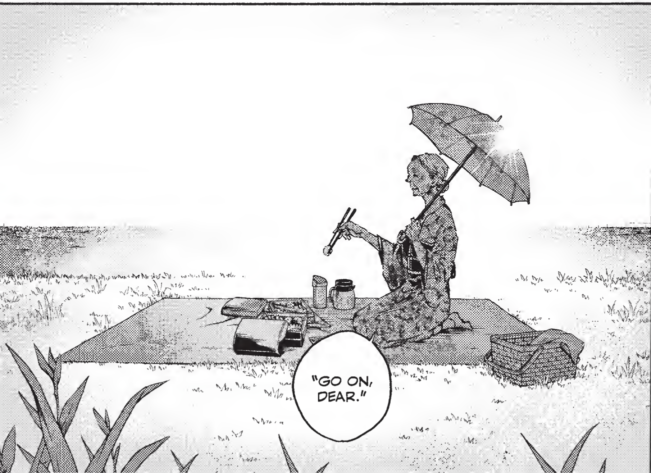

...THAT WAS EXHAUSTING.
NO, I THOUGHT IT WAS INTERESTING.
IT'S LIKE, REMEMBER THAT GRAFFITI LEGEND?
SOME GUYS DIE LIKE THAT BUT GO ON LIVING IN PEOPLE'S MEMORIES.
BUT SOME PEOPLE DIE EVEN WHILE THEY'RE ALIVE.
...DON'T SAY THAT, AMANO-KUN. IT SCARES ME.
IT DOES?

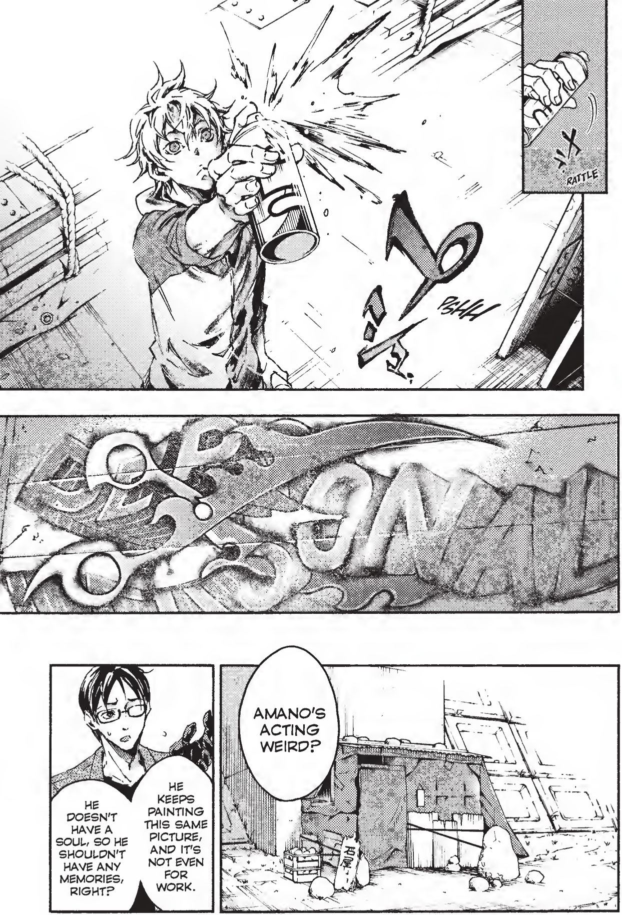

WHAT ARE YOU SCARED OF?

Chapter 15 ✚ The Dead's Time



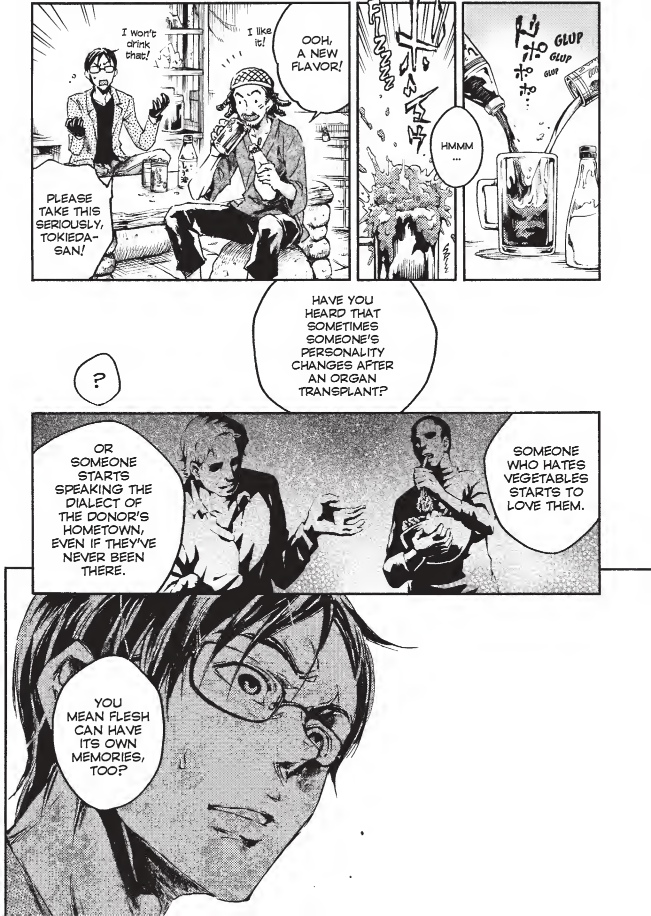

"NOW, NOW."
"DON'T BE SO PICKY."

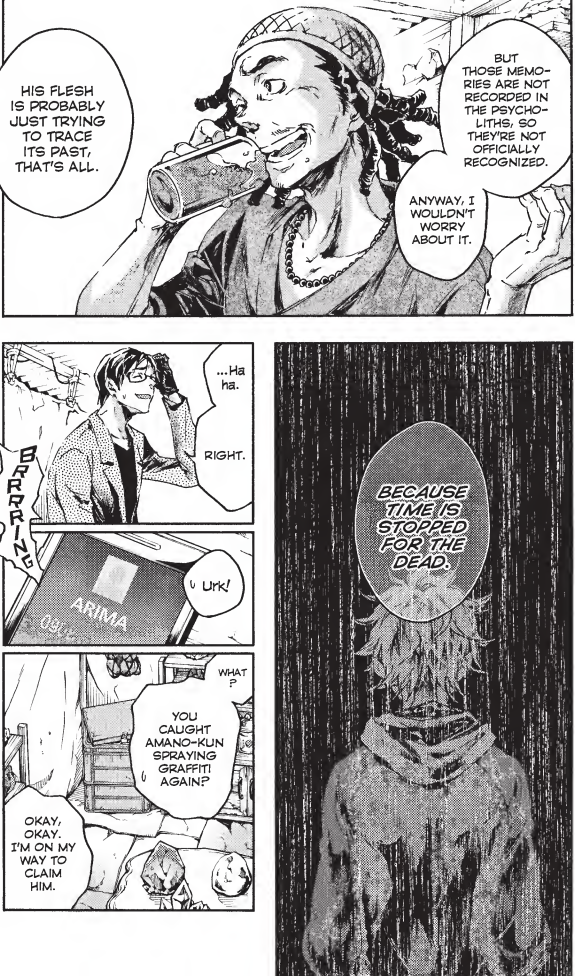

"GO ON, DEAR."

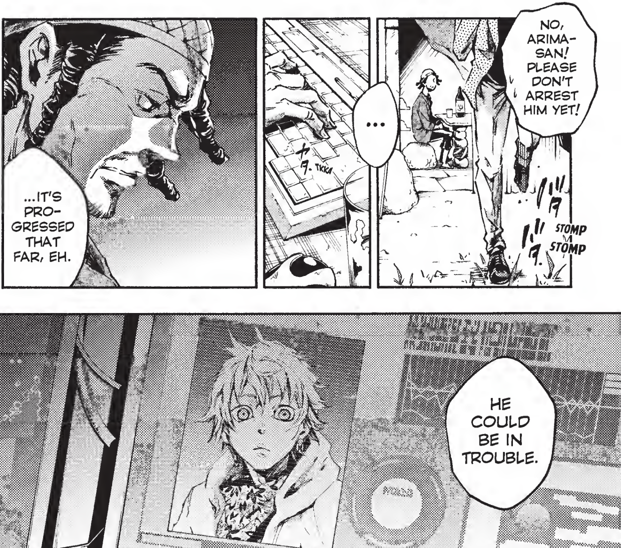

RATTLE
PSHH
AMANO'S ACTING WEIRD?
HE KEEPS PAINTING THIS SAME PICTURE, AND IT'S NOT EVEN FOR WORK.
HE DOESN'T HAVE A SOUL, SO HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY MEMORIES, RIGHT?

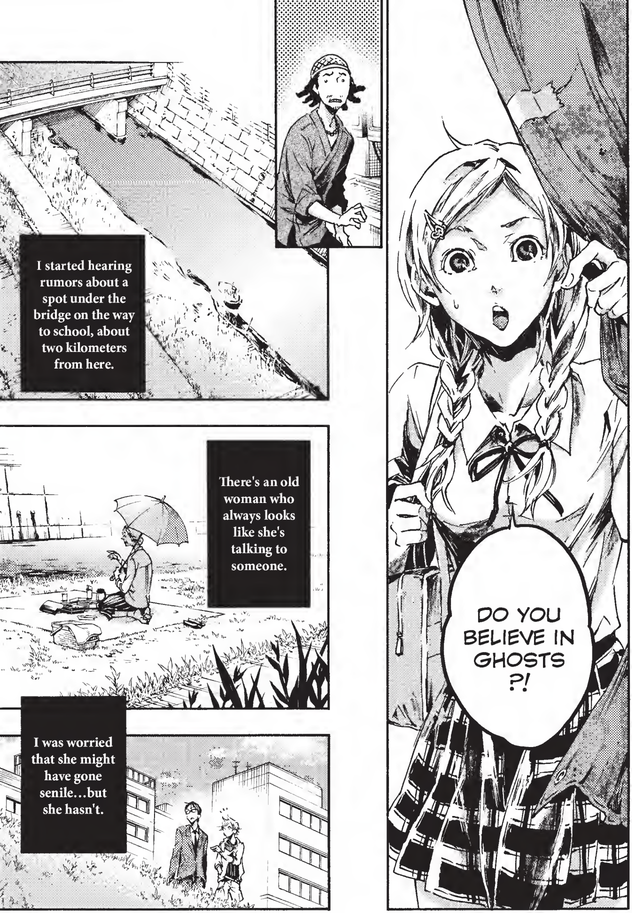
SIGN: Stone Shop

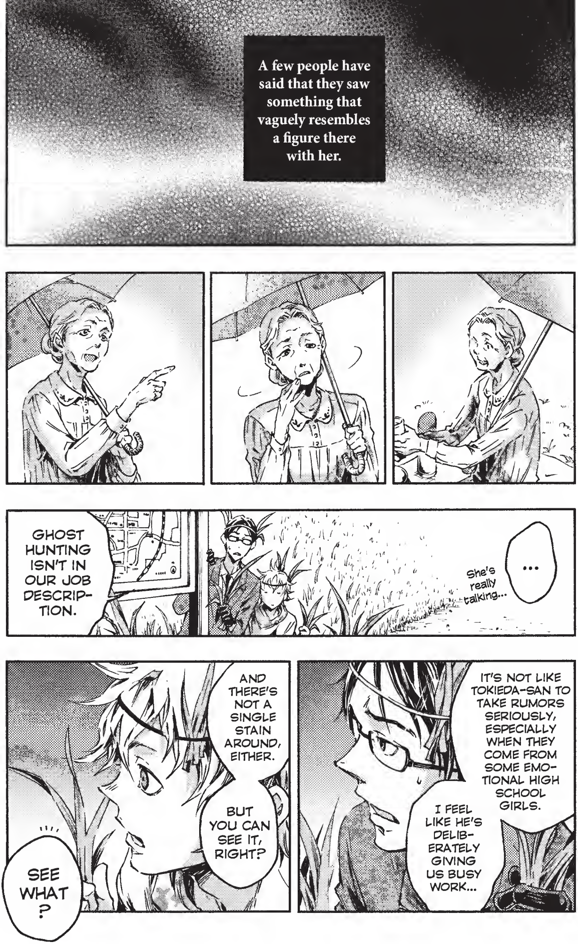
CAN: Strawberry **BOTTLE:** Soy Sauce

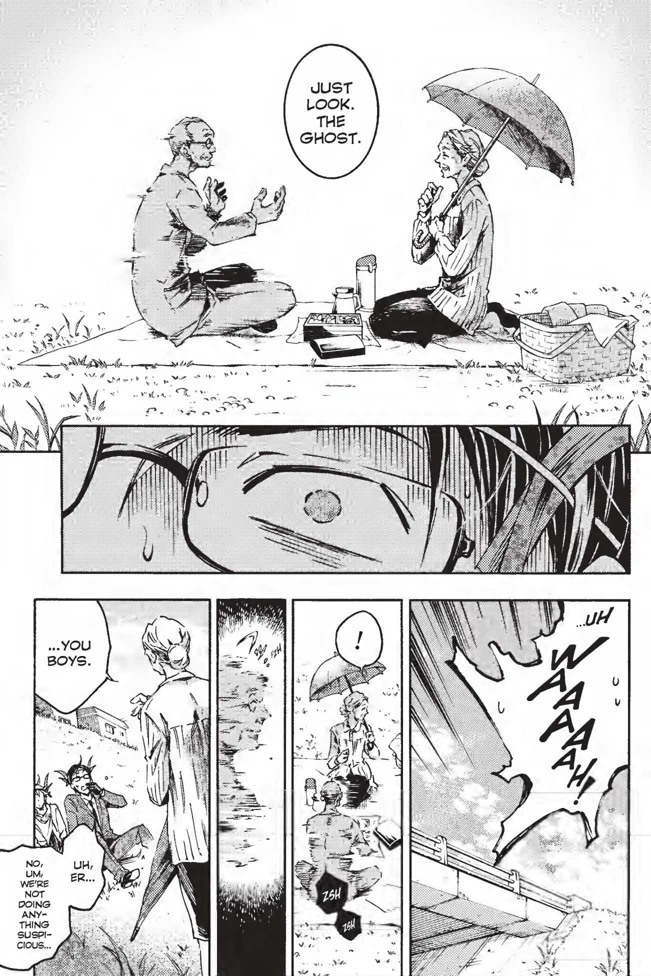

GLUP
GLUP
GLUP
FIZZZZ
HMMM ...
OOH, A NEW FLAVOR!
I like it!
I won't drink that!
PLEASE TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY, TOKIEDA-SAN!
HAVE YOU HEARD THAT SOMETIMES SOMEONE'S PERSONALITY CHANGES AFTER AN ORGAN TRANSPLANT?
?
SOMEONE WHO HATES VEGETABLES STARTS TO LOVE THEM.
OR SOMEONE STARTS SPEAKING THE DIALECT OF THE DONOR'S HOMETOWN, EVEN IF THEY'VE NEVER BEEN THERE.
YOU MEAN FLESH CAN HAVE ITS OWN MEMORIES, TOO?

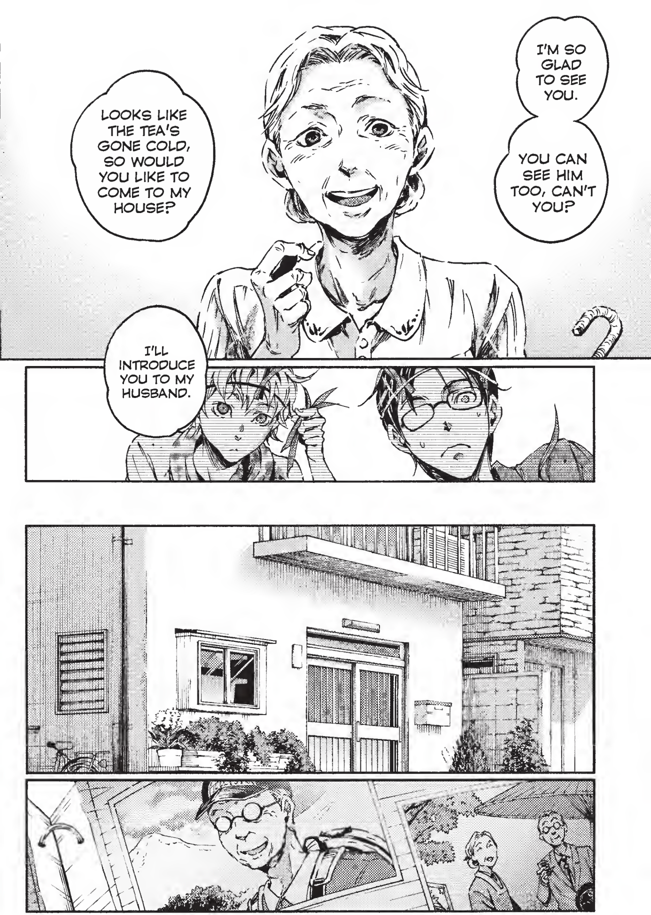

HIS FLESH IS PROBABLY JUST TRYING TO TRACE ITS PAST, THAT'S ALL.
BUT THOSE MEMORIES ARE NOT RECORDED IN THE PSYCHOLITHS, SO THEY'RE NOT OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED.
ANYWAY, I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
BECAUSE TIME IS STOPPED FOR THE DEAD.
...Ha ha.
RIGHT.
BRRRING
ARIMA
09
Urk!
WHAT?
YOU CAUGHT AMANO-KUN SPRAYING GRAFFITI AGAIN?
OKAY, OKAY. I'M ON MY WAY TO CLAIM HIM.

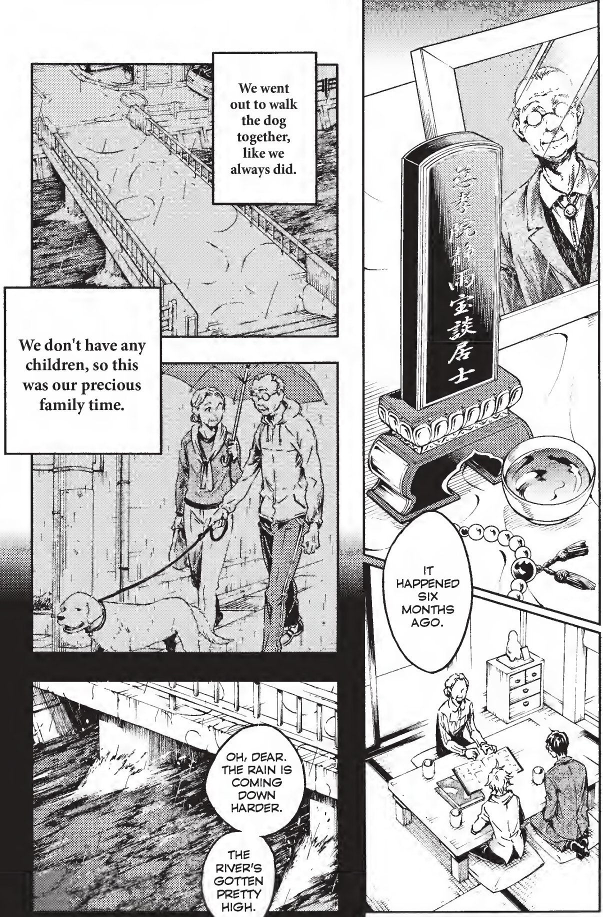

NO, ARIMA-SAN! PLEASE DON'T ARREST HIM YET!
STOMP
STOMP
...
TKKA
...IT'S PROGRESSED THAT FAR, EH.
HE COULD BE IN TROUBLE.
SIGN: Open
CLANG
CLANG
HM?
OH, KAE.
...HEY, DAD.

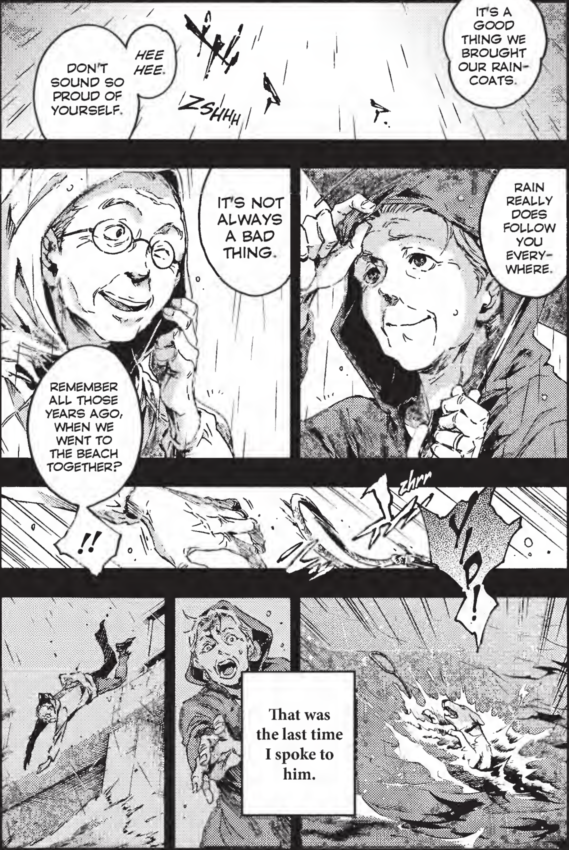

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS ?!
I started hearing rumors about a spot under the bridge on the way to school, about two kilometers from here.
There's an old woman who always looks like she's talking to someone.
I was worried that she might have gone senile…but she hasn't.

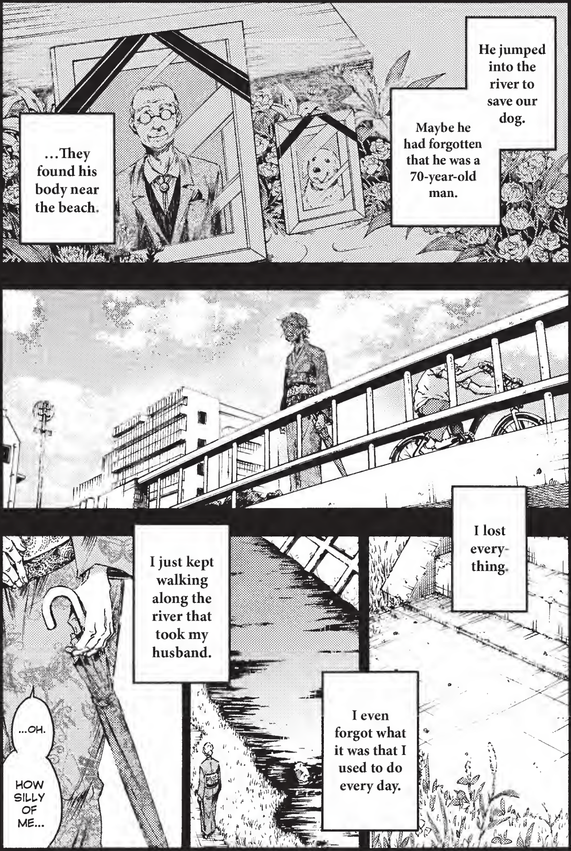

A few people have said that they saw something that vaguely resembles a figure there with her.
...
She's really talking...
GHOST HUNTING ISN'T IN OUR JOB DESCRIPTION.
IT'S NOT LIKE TOKIEDA-SAN TO TAKE RUMORS SERIOUSLY, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY COME FROM SOME EMOTIONAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS.
I FEEL LIKE HE'S DELIBERATELY GIVING US BUSY WORK...
AND THERE'S NOT A SINGLE STAIN AROUND, EITHER.
BUT YOU CAN SEE IT, RIGHT?
SEE WHAT?

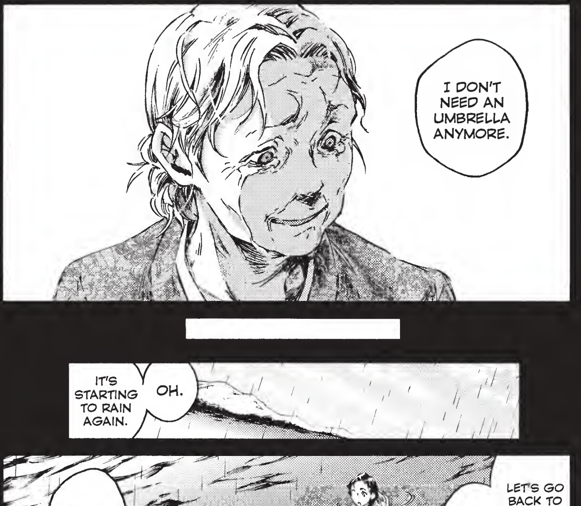

JUST LOOK. THE GHOST.
...UH
WAAAAAH!
!
ZSH
ZSH
FZH
...YOU BOYS.
UH, ER...
NO, UM, WE'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS...

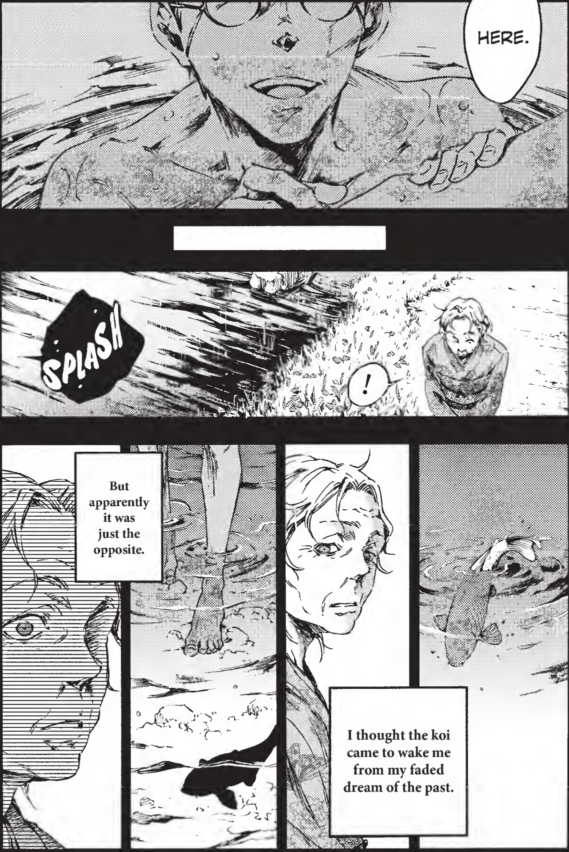

I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU.
YOU CAN SEE HIM TOO, CAN'T YOU?
LOOKS LIKE THE TEA'S GONE COLD, SO WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO MY HOUSE?
I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO MY HUSBAND.

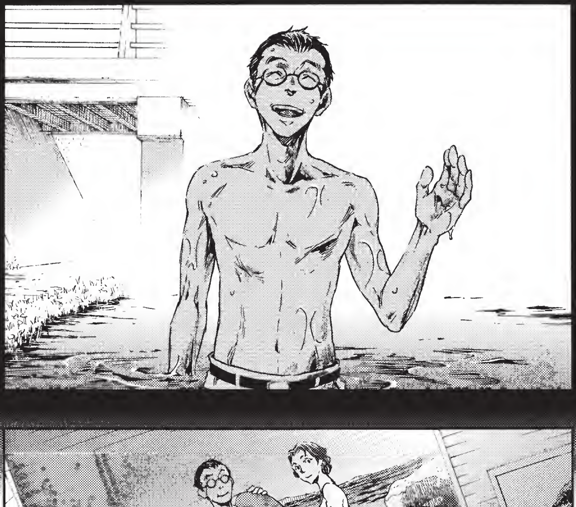

IT HAPPENED SIX MONTHS AGO.
We went out to walk the dog together, like we always did.
We don't have any children, so this was our precious family time.
OH, DEAR. THE RAIN IS COMING DOWN HARDER.
THE RIVER'S GOTTEN PRETTY HIGH.

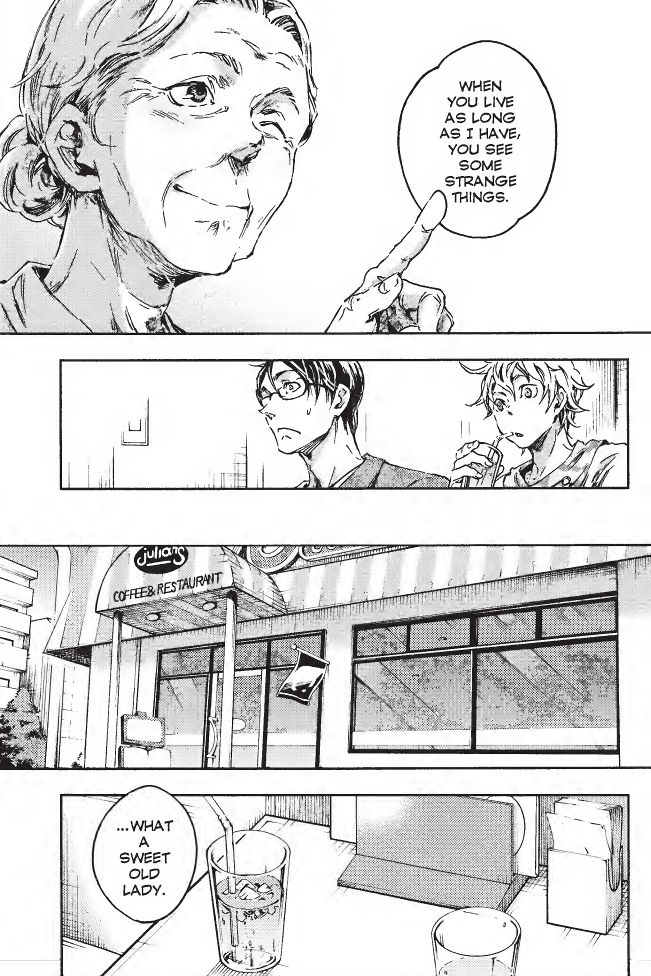

IT'S A GOOD THING WE BROUGHT OUR RAIN-COATS.
ZSHHH
HEE HEE.
DON'T SOUND SO PROUD OF YOURSELF.
RAIN REALLY DOES FOLLOW YOU EVERY-WHERE.
IT'S NOT ALWAYS A BAD THING.
REMEMBER ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, WHEN WE WENT TO THE BEACH TOGETHER?
zhrr
!!
That was the last time I spoke to him.

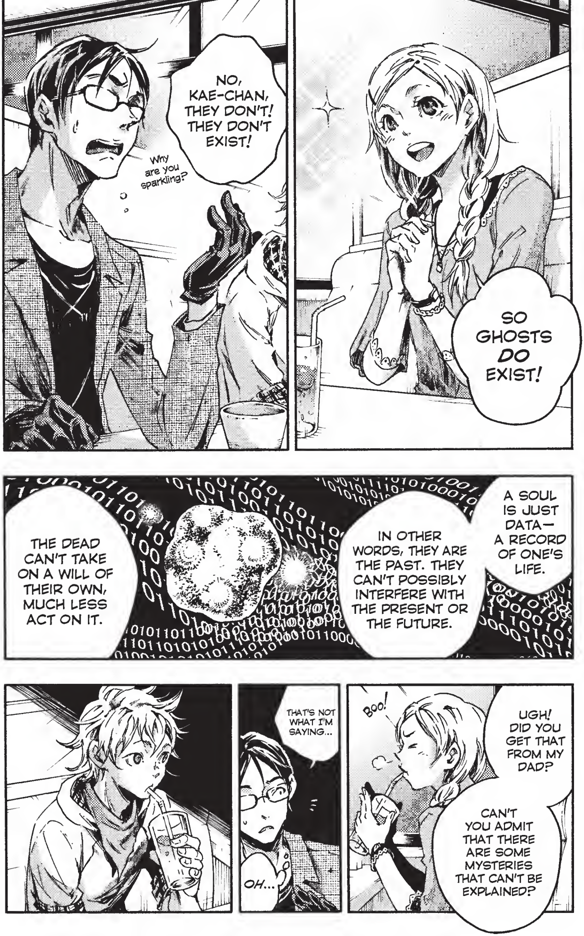

He jumped into the river to save our dog.
Maybe he had forgotten that he was a 70-year-old man.
…They found his body near the beach.
I lost every-thing.
I even forgot what it was that I used to do every day.
I just kept walking along the river that took my husband.
...OH.
HOW SILLY OF ME...

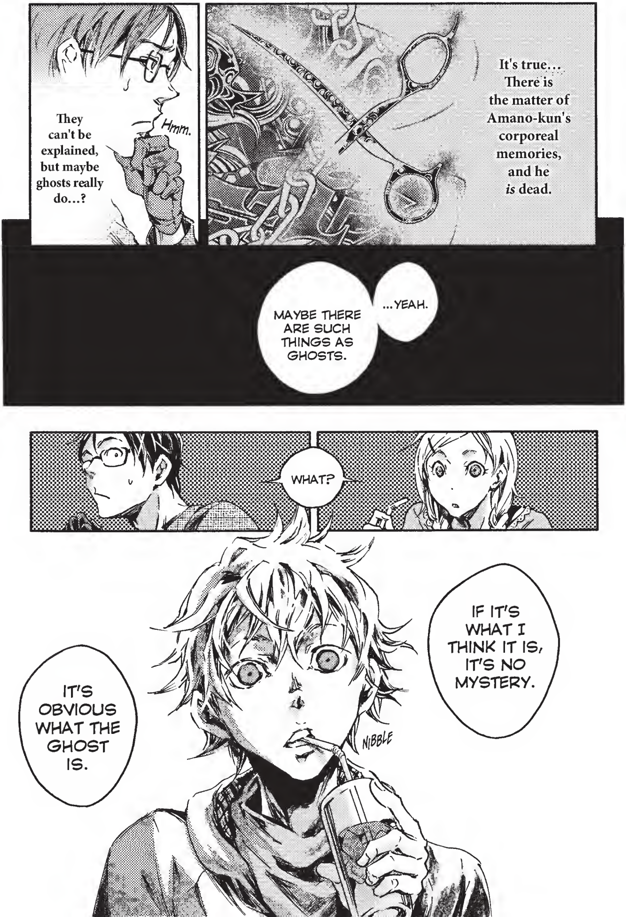

I DON'T NEED AN UMBRELLA ANYMORE.
OH.
IT'S STARTING TO RAIN AGAIN.
LET'S GO BACK TO SHORE.
KŌSUKE-SAN, WHERE ARE YOU?
KŌSUKE-SAN?
SPLASH
EEK!
PLEASE DON'T STARTLE ME LIKE THAT!
Ha ha.
ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE.

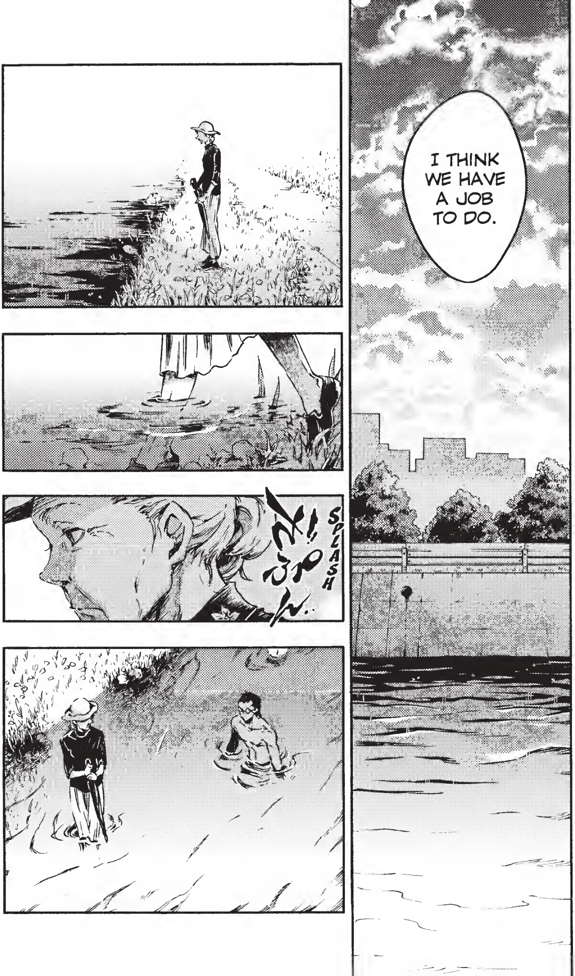

HERE.
SPLASH
!
I thought the koi came to wake me from my faded dream of the past.
But apparently it was just the opposite.

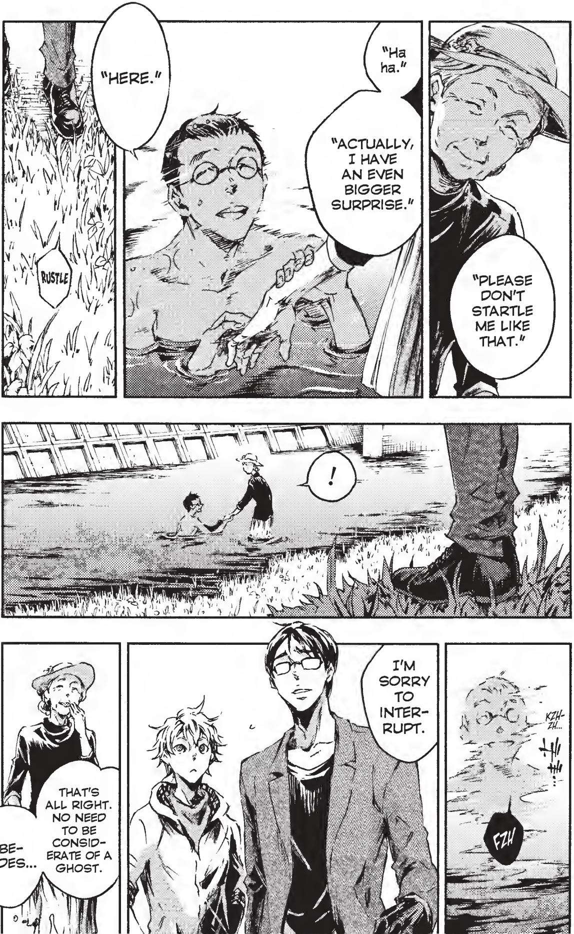

...IMPOSSIBLE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
Hee hee.
BUT YOU SAW HIM, DIDN'T YOU?
WHEN I GO TO THE RIVER, I GET TO SEE MY HUSBAND.
ALTHOUGH HIS AGE AND HIS CLOTHES ARE DIFFERENT EACH DAY.
CLUNK

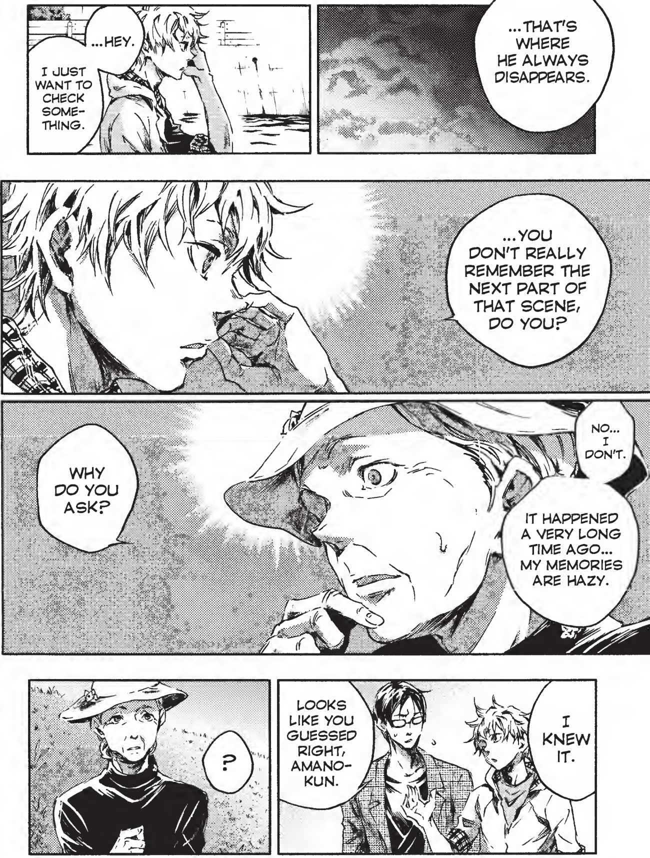

WHEN YOU LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE, YOU SEE SOME STRANGE THINGS.
julians
COFFEE& RESTAURANT
...WHAT A SWEET OLD LADY.

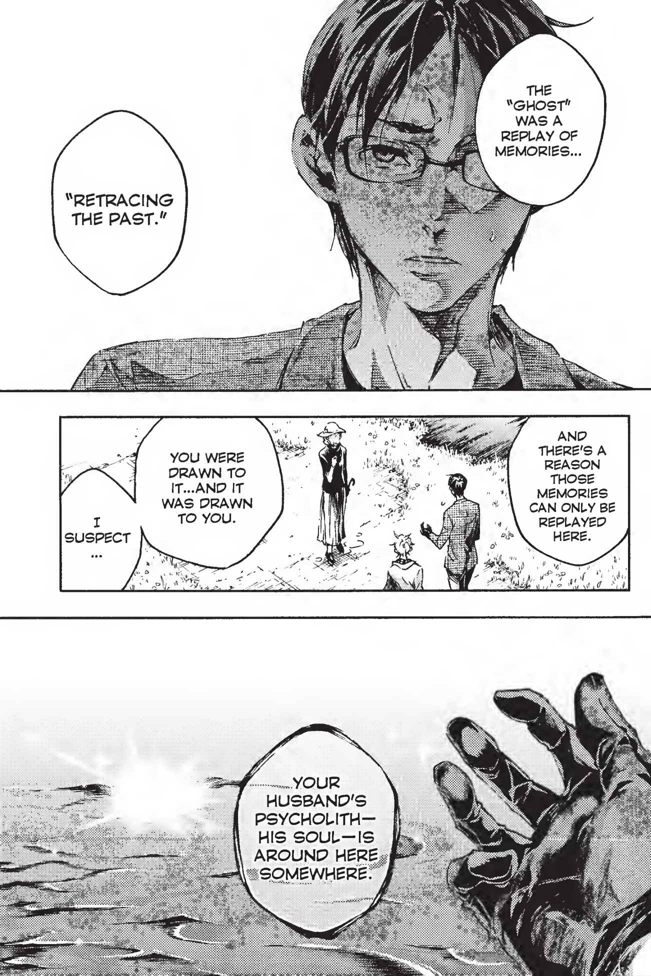

SO GHOSTS *DO* EXIST!
NO, KAE-CHAN, THEY DON'T! THEY DON'T EXIST!
Why are you sparkling?
A SOUL IS JUST DATA— A RECORD OF ONE'S LIFE.
IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE THE PAST. THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY INTERFERE WITH THE PRESENT OR THE FUTURE.
THE DEAD CAN'T TAKE ON A WILL OF THEIR OWN, MUCH LESS ACT ON IT.
UGH! DID YOU GET THAT FROM MY DAD?
BOO!
CAN'T YOU ADMIT THAT THERE ARE SOME MYSTERIES THAT CAN'T BE EXPLAINED?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SAYING...
OH...

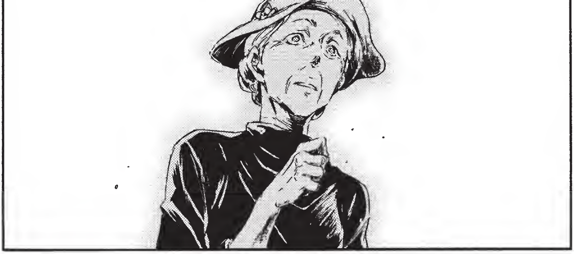

It's true… There is the matter of Amano-kun's corporeal memories, and he *is* dead.
Hmm.
They can't be explained, but maybe ghosts really do…?
…YEAH.
MAYBE THERE ARE SUCH THINGS AS GHOSTS.
WHAT?
IF IT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS, IT'S NO MYSTERY.
NIBBLE
IT'S OBVIOUS WHAT THE GHOST IS.

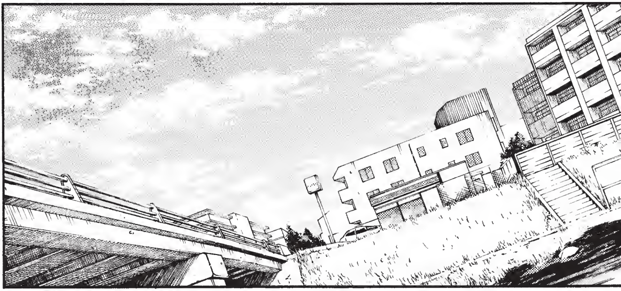

I THINK WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.
ざぶん..
SPLASH

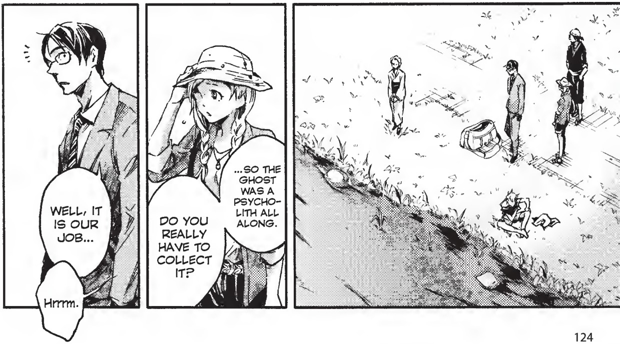

"PLEASE DON'T STARTLE ME LIKE THAT."
"Ha ha."
"ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE."
"HERE."
RUSTLE
!
KZH-ZH...
FZH
I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. NO NEED TO BE CONSIDERATE OF A GHOST.
BESIDES...

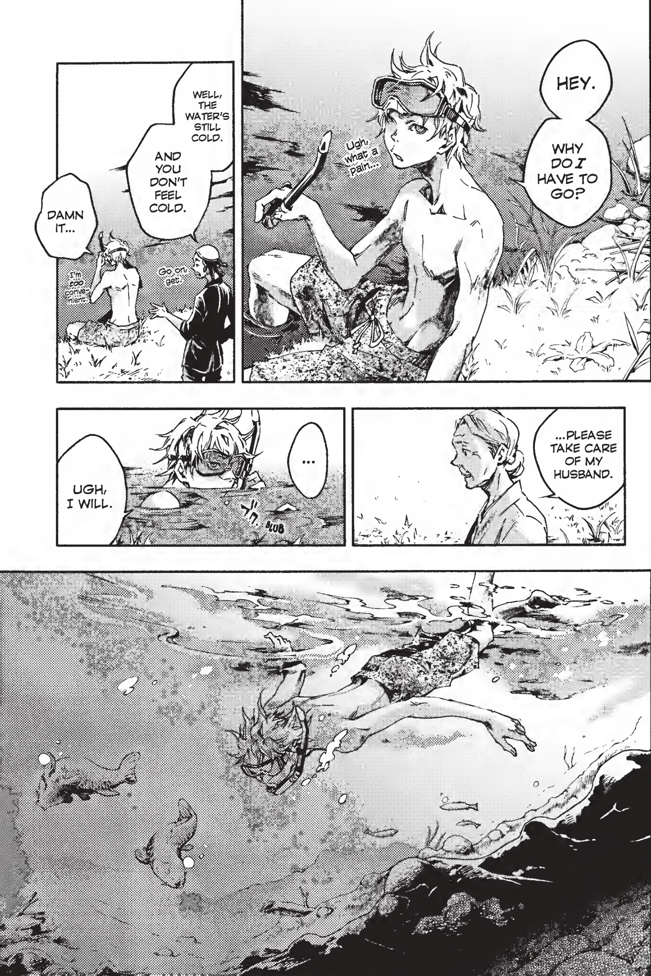

...THAT'S WHERE HE ALWAYS DISAPPEARS.
...HEY.
I JUST WANT TO CHECK SOMETHING.
...YOU DON'T REALLY REMEMBER THE NEXT PART OF THAT SCENE, DO YOU?
NO... I DON'T.
IT HAPPENED A VERY LONG TIME AGO... MY MEMORIES ARE HAZY.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
I KNEW IT.
LOOKS LIKE YOU GUESSED RIGHT, AMANO-KUN.
?

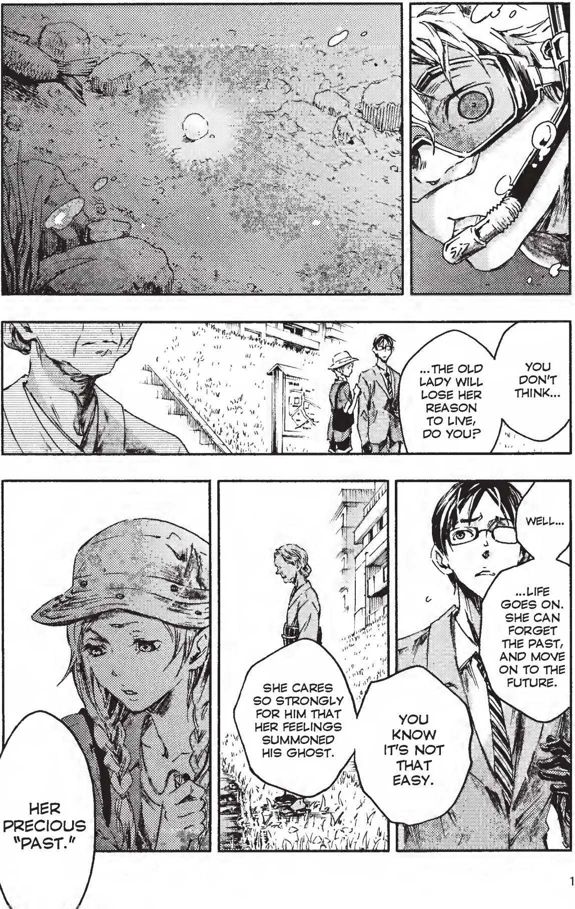

THE "GHOST" WAS A REPLAY OF MEMORIES...
"RETRACING THE PAST."
AND THERE'S A REASON THOSE MEMORIES CAN ONLY BE REPLAYED HERE.
YOU WERE DRAWN TO IT...AND IT WAS DRAWN TO YOU.
I SUSPECT...
...YOUR HUSBAND'S PSYCHOLITH—HIS SOUL—IS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.

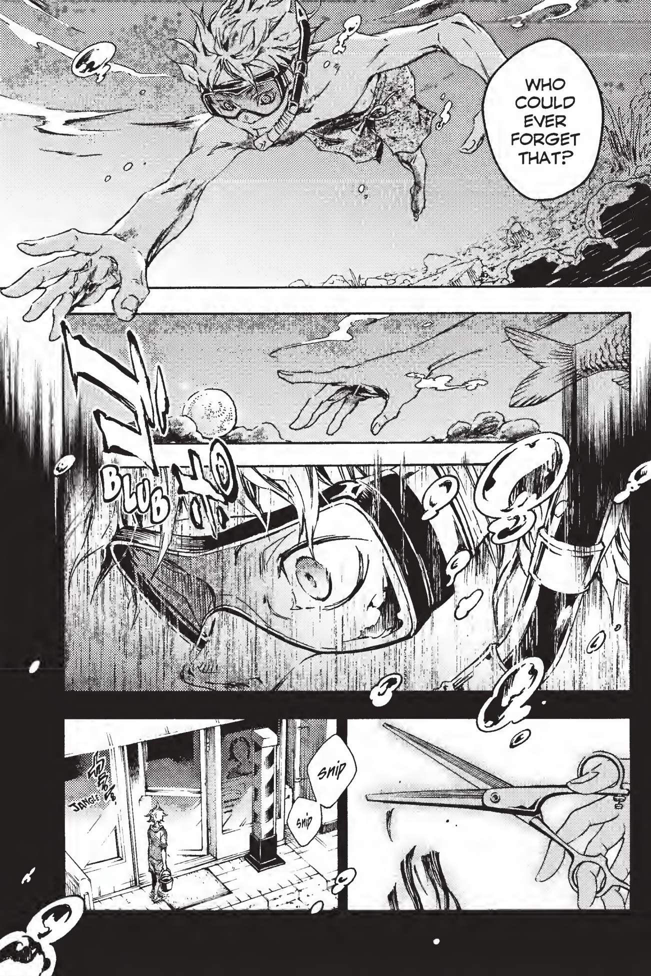


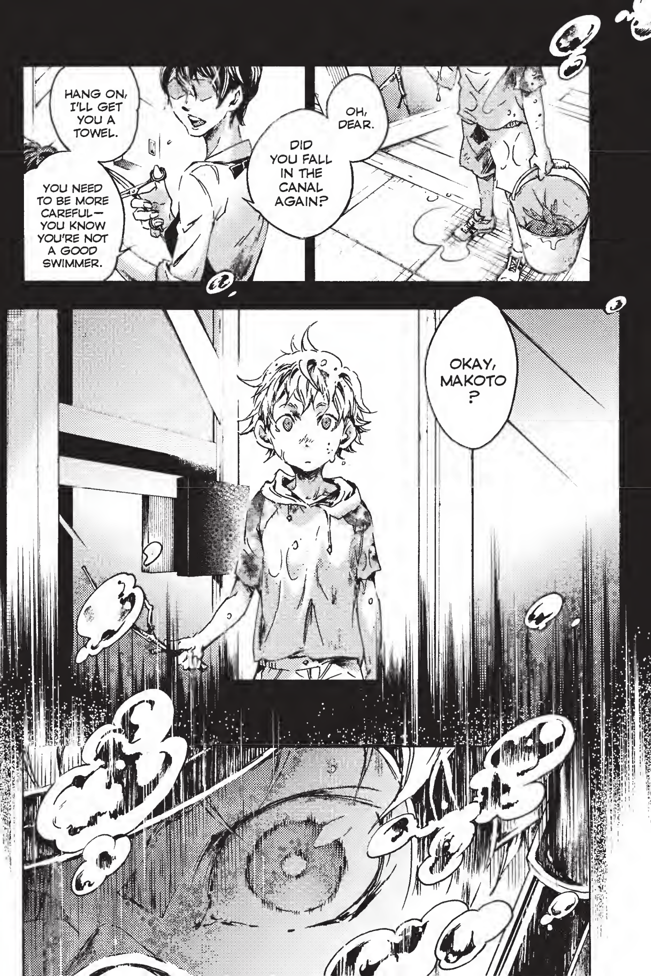


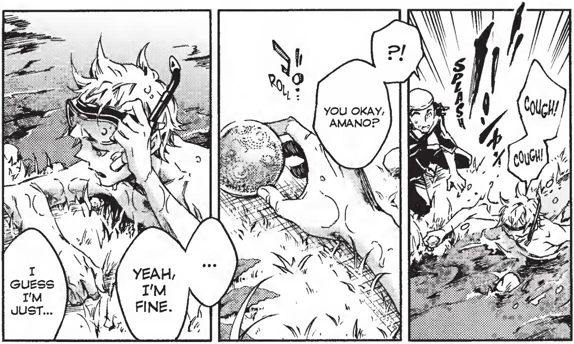

...SO THE GHOST WAS A PSYCHOLITH ALL ALONG.
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO COLLECT IT?
WELL, IT IS OUR JOB...
Hrrrm.

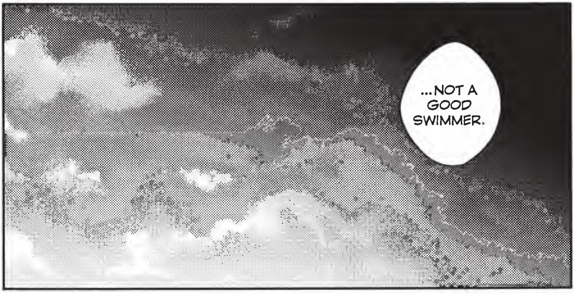

HEY.
WHY DO *I* HAVE TO GO?
Ugh, what a pain...
WELL, THE WATER'S STILL COLD.
AND YOU DON'T FEEL COLD.
Go on, get.
DAMN IT...
I'm *too* convenient.
...PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY HUSBAND.
...
UGH, I WILL.
BLUB

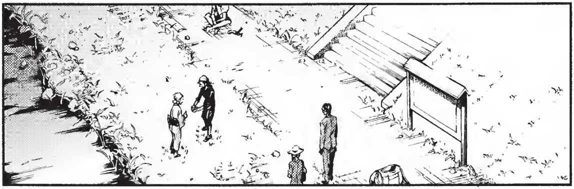

YOU DON'T THINK...
...THE OLD LADY WILL LOSE HER REASON TO LIVE, DO YOU?
WELL...
...LIFE GOES ON. SHE CAN FORGET THE PAST, AND MOVE ON TO THE FUTURE.
YOU KNOW IT'S NOT THAT EASY.
SHE CARES SO STRONGLY FOR HIM THAT HER FEELINGS SUMMONED HIS GHOST.
HER PRECIOUS "PAST."

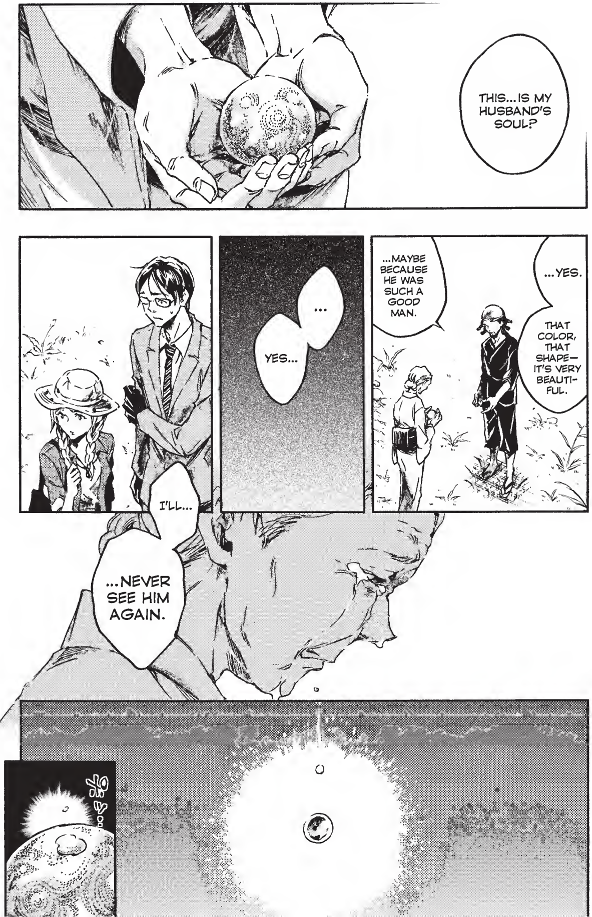

WHO COULD EVER FORGET THAT?
BLUB
snip
snip
JANGLE

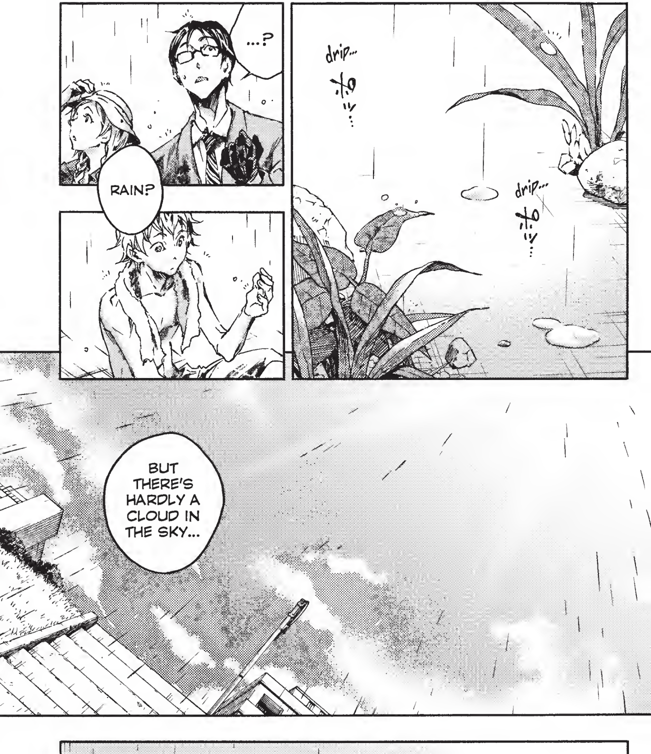

OH, DEAR.
DID YOU FALL IN THE CANAL AGAIN?
HANG ON, I'LL GET YOU A TOWEL.
YOU NEED TO BE MORE CAREFUL—YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT A GOOD SWIMMER.
OKAY, MAKOTO?

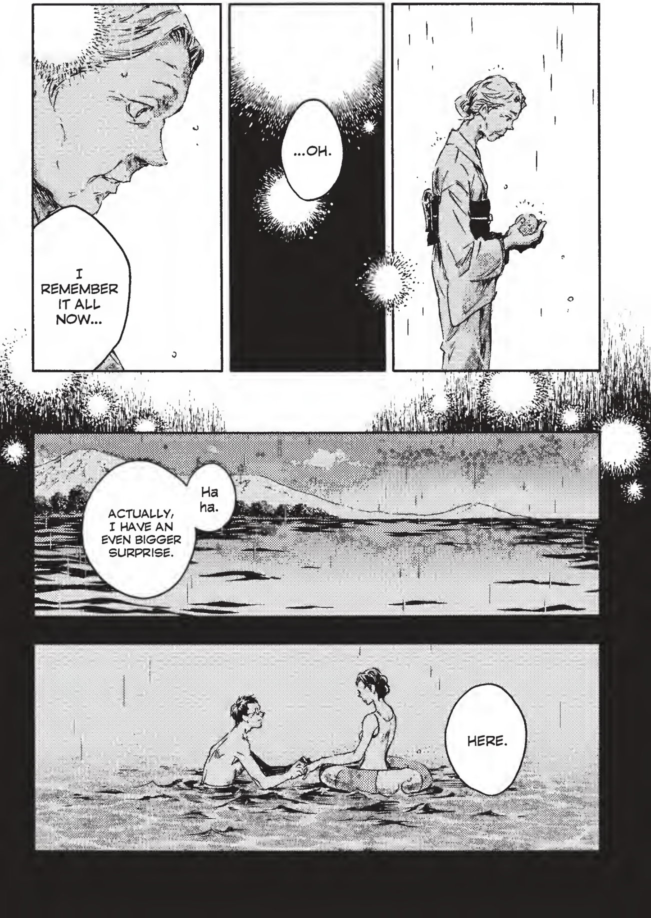

SPLASH
COUGH!
COUGH!
?!
ROLL
YOU OKAY, AMANO?
...
YEAH, I'M FINE.
I GUESS I'M JUST...

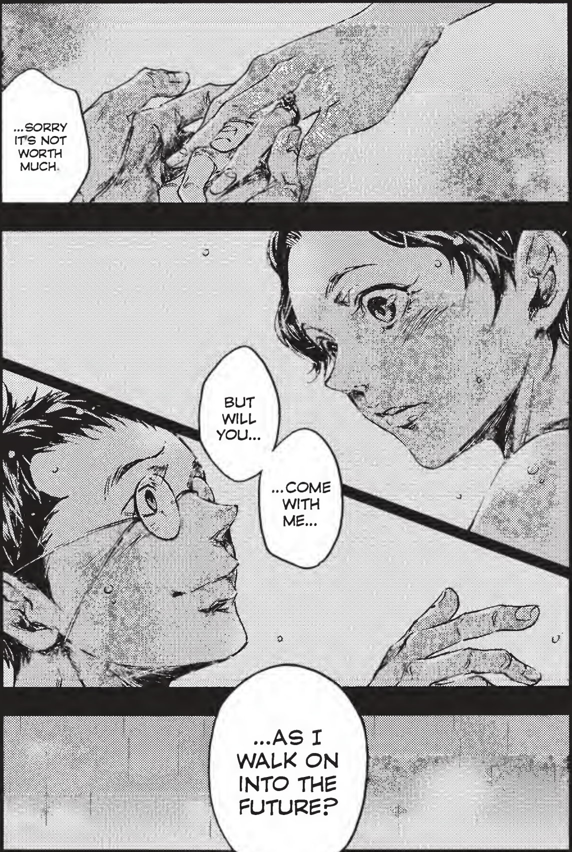

...NOT A GOOD SWIMMER.

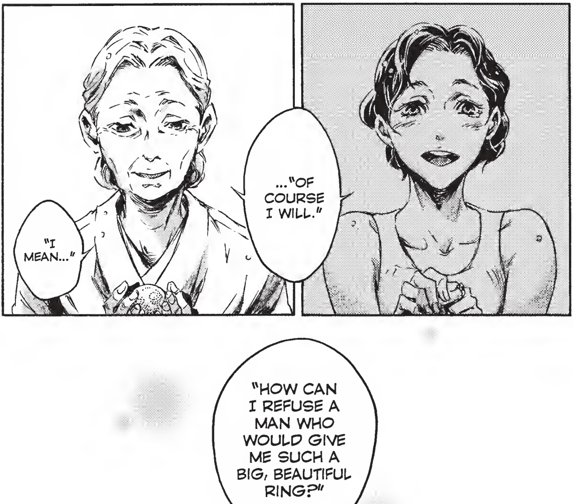


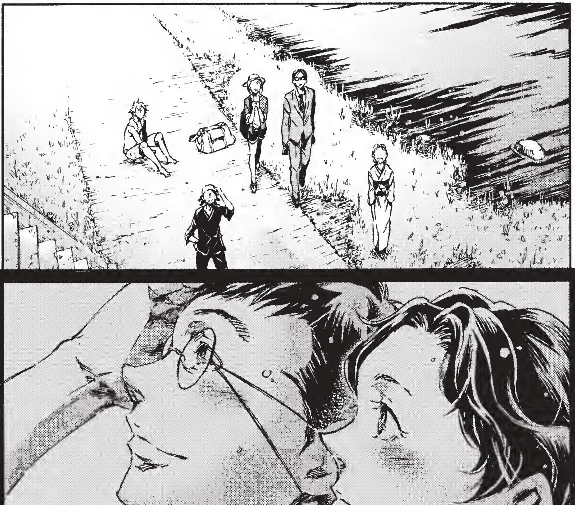

THIS...IS MY HUSBAND'S SOUL?
...YES.
THAT COLOR, THAT SHAPE— IT'S VERY BEAUTIFUL.
...MAYBE BECAUSE HE WAS SUCH A GOOD MAN.
...
YES...
I'LL...
...NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN.
ポツ…

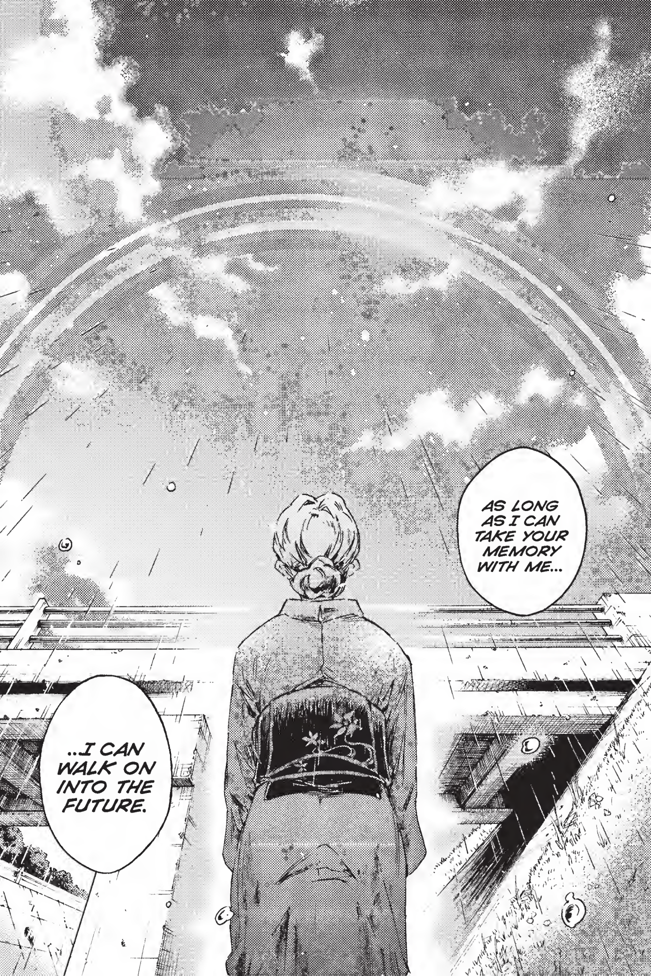

drip...
ポッ…
drip...
ポッ…
...?
RAIN?
BUT THERE'S HARDLY A CLOUD IN THE SKY...
サァァ…
SHHH

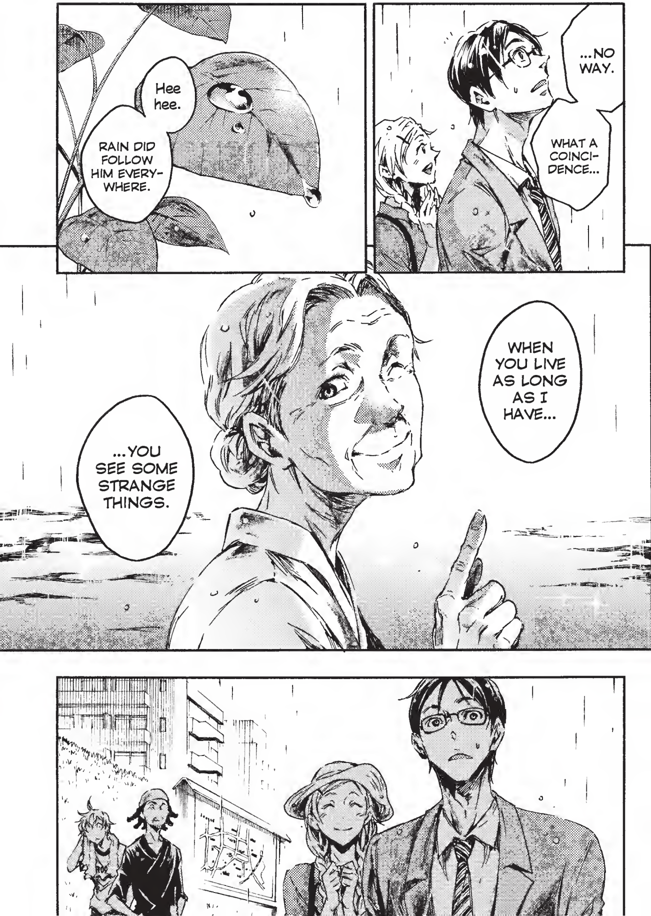

...OH.
I REMEMBER IT ALL NOW...
Ha ha.
ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE.
HERE.

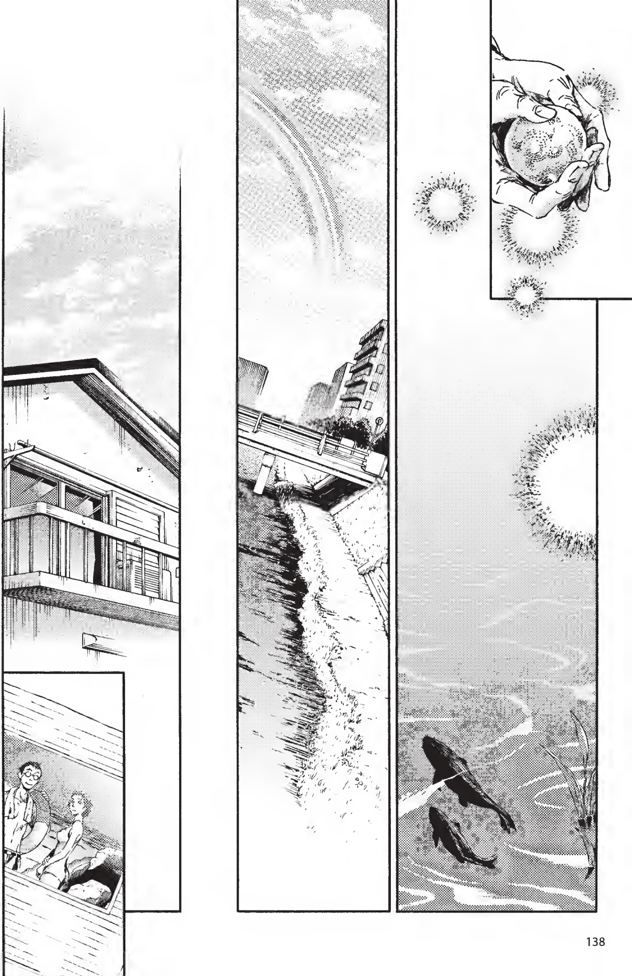

...SORRY IT'S NOT WORTH MUCH.
BUT WILL YOU...
...COME WITH ME...
...AS I WALK ON INTO THE FUTURE?

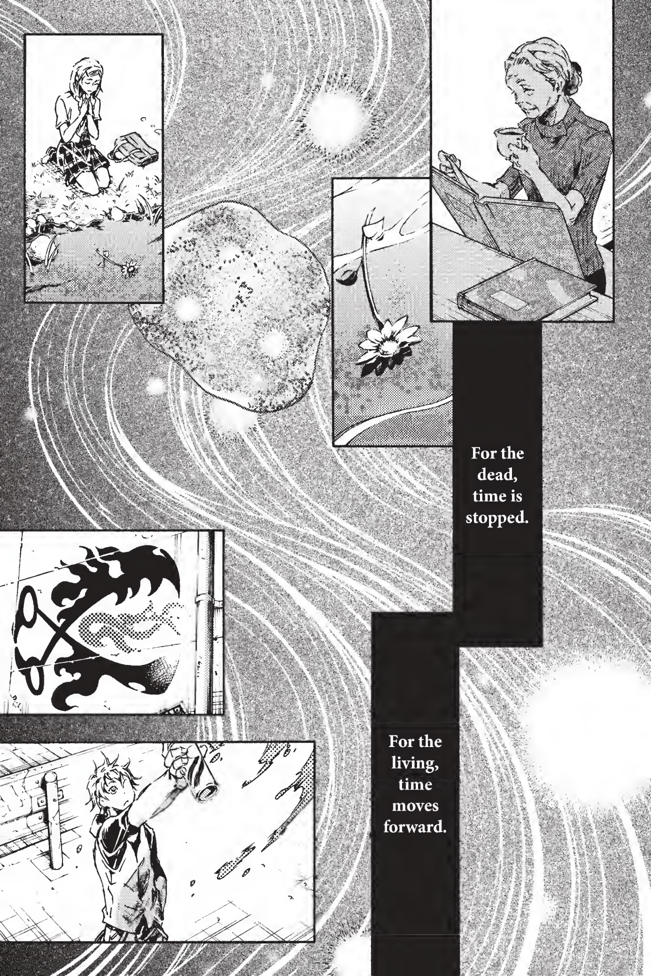

…"OF COURSE I WILL."
"I MEAN…"
"HOW CAN I REFUSE A MAN WHO WOULD GIVE ME SUCH A BIG, BEAUTIFUL RING?"
?
…!

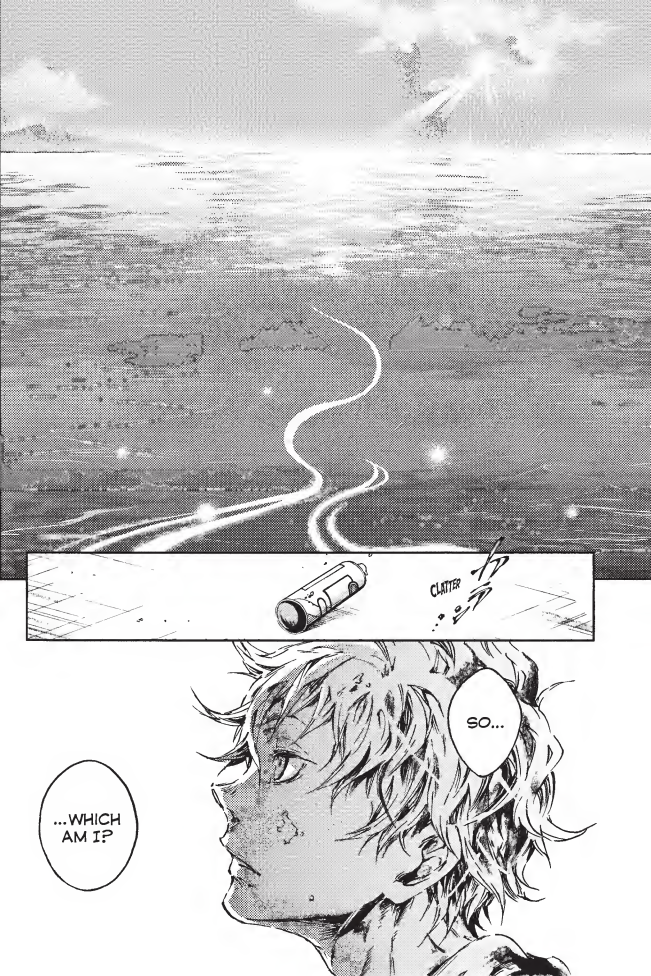

...IT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR.


AS LONG AS I CAN TAKE YOUR MEMORY WITH ME...
..I CAN WALK ON INTO THE FUTURE.

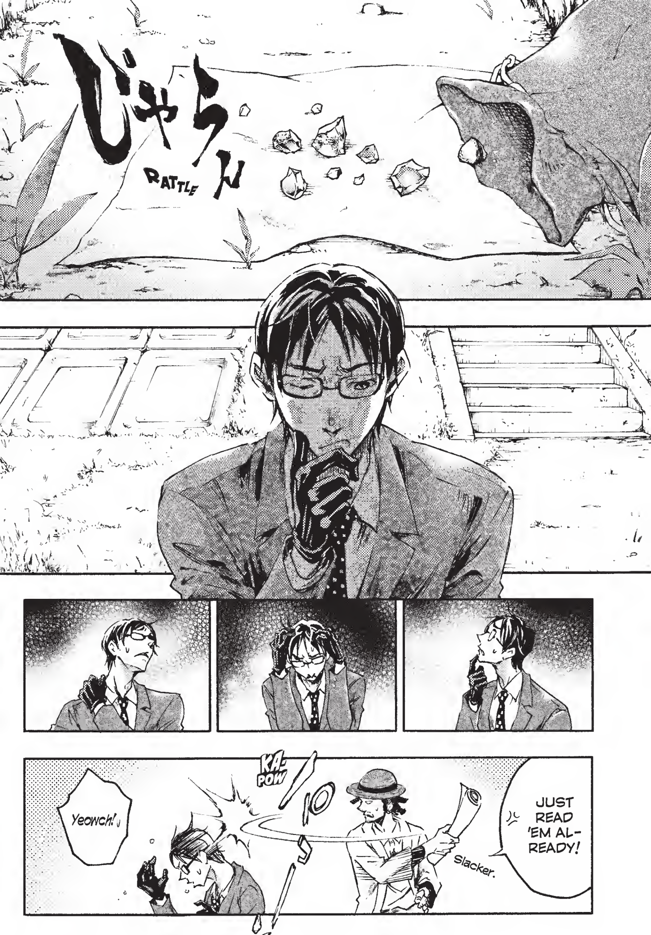

...NO WAY.
WHAT A COINCIDENCE...
Hee hee.
RAIN DID FOLLOW HIM EVERYWHERE.
WHEN YOU LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE...
...YOU SEE SOME STRANGE THINGS.

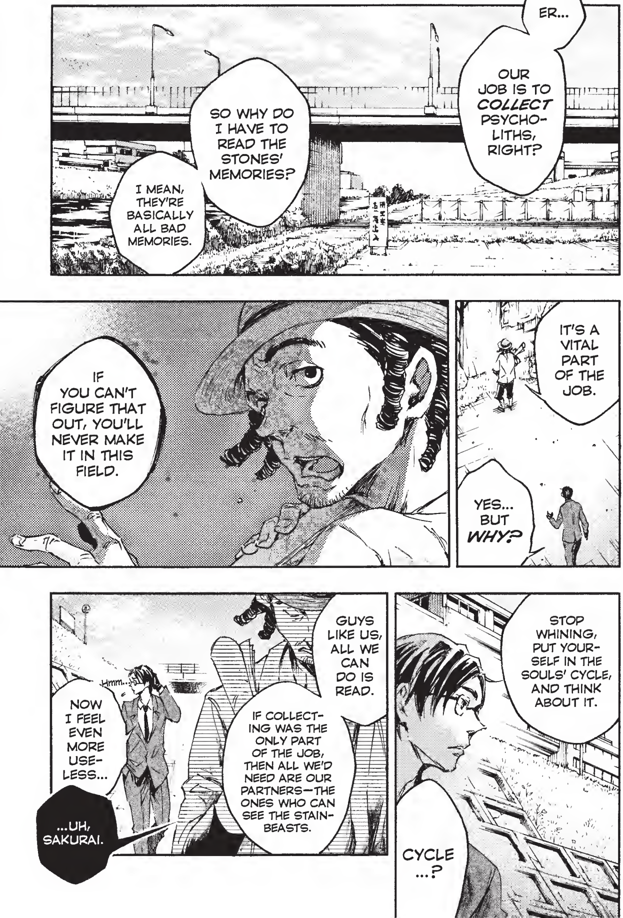


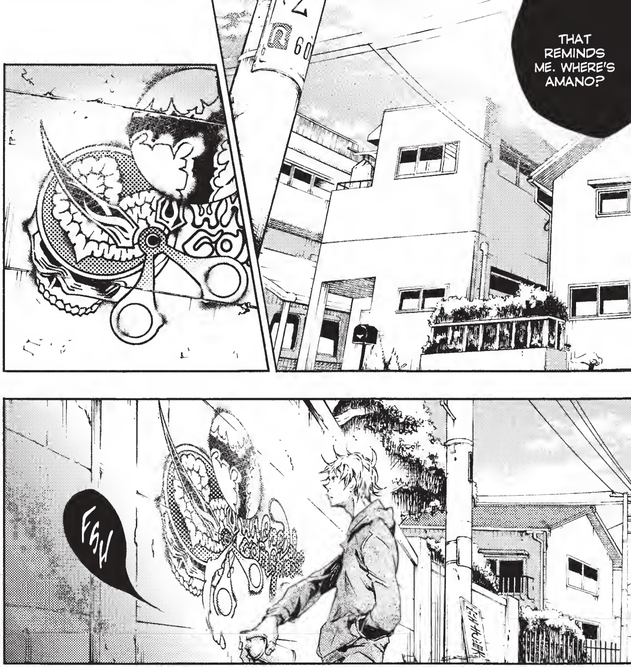

For the dead, time is stopped.
For the living, time moves forward.


カラン
CLATTER
SO...
...WHICH AM I?

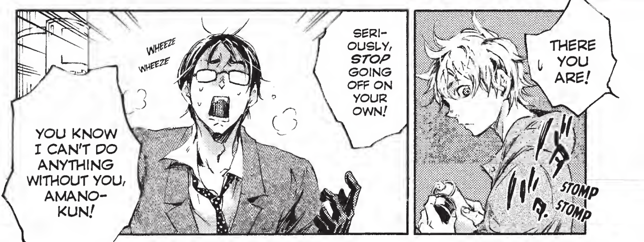
Chapter 16 ✚ A Listening Ear

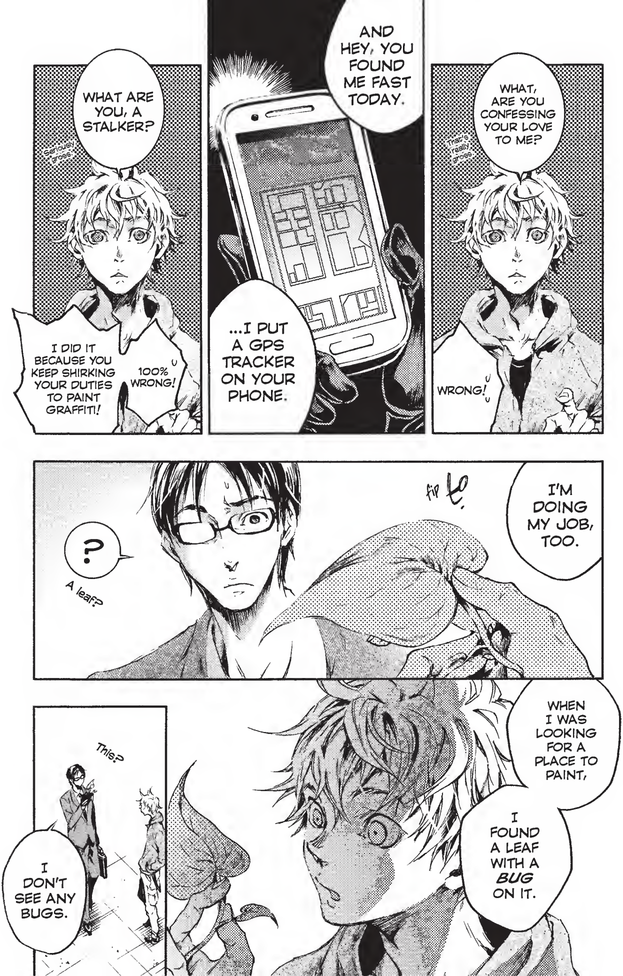

じゃらん
RATTLE
JUST READ 'EM ALREADY!
Slacker.
KA-POW
Yeowch!

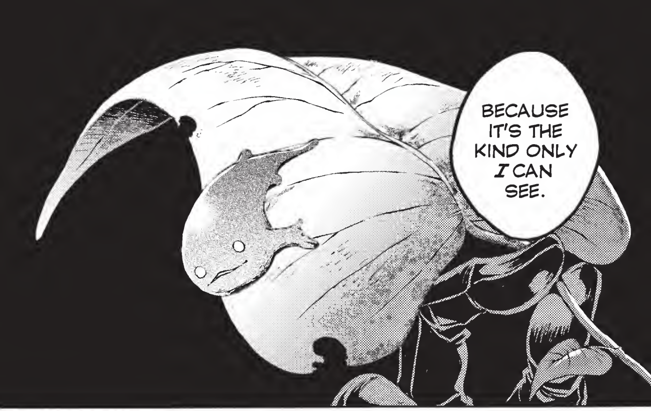

ER...
OUR JOB IS TO *COLLECT* PSYCHOLITHS, RIGHT?
SO WHY DO I HAVE TO READ THE STONES' MEMORIES?
I MEAN, THEY'RE BASICALLY ALL BAD MEMORIES.
IT'S A VITAL PART OF THE JOB.
YES... BUT *WHY?*
IF YOU CAN'T FIGURE THAT OUT, YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT IN THIS FIELD.
STOP WHINING, PUT YOURSELF IN THE SOULS' CYCLE, AND THINK ABOUT IT.
CYCLE ...?
GUYS LIKE US, ALL WE CAN DO IS READ.
IF COLLECTING WAS THE ONLY PART OF THE JOB, THEN ALL WE'D NEED ARE OUR PARTNERS—THE ONES WHO CAN SEE THE STAIN-BEASTS.
Hmm...
NOW I FEEL EVEN MORE USELESS...
...UH, SAKURAI.

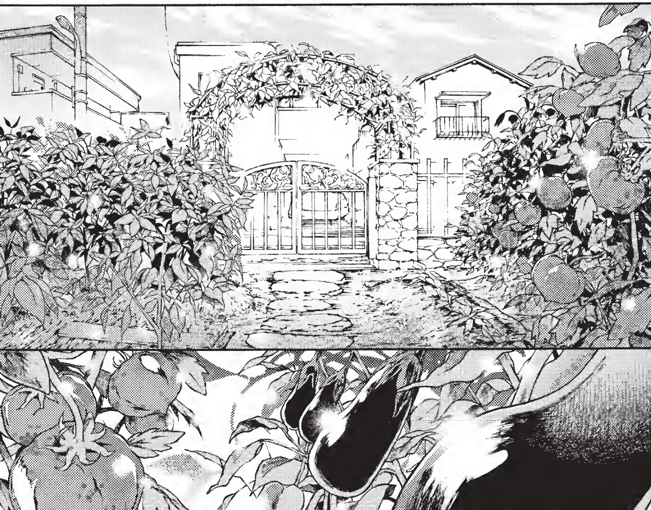

THAT REMINDS ME. WHERE'S AMANO?
FSH

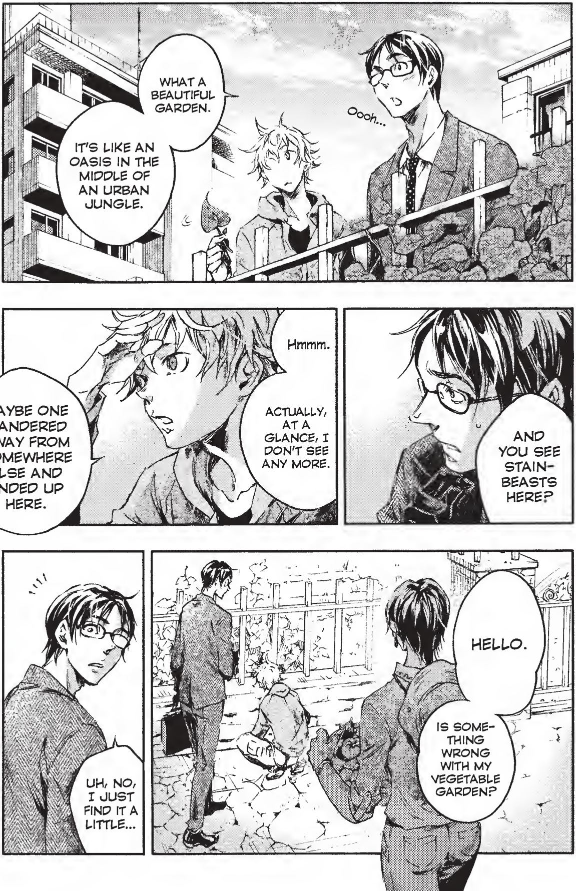
SIGN: Watch for prowlers

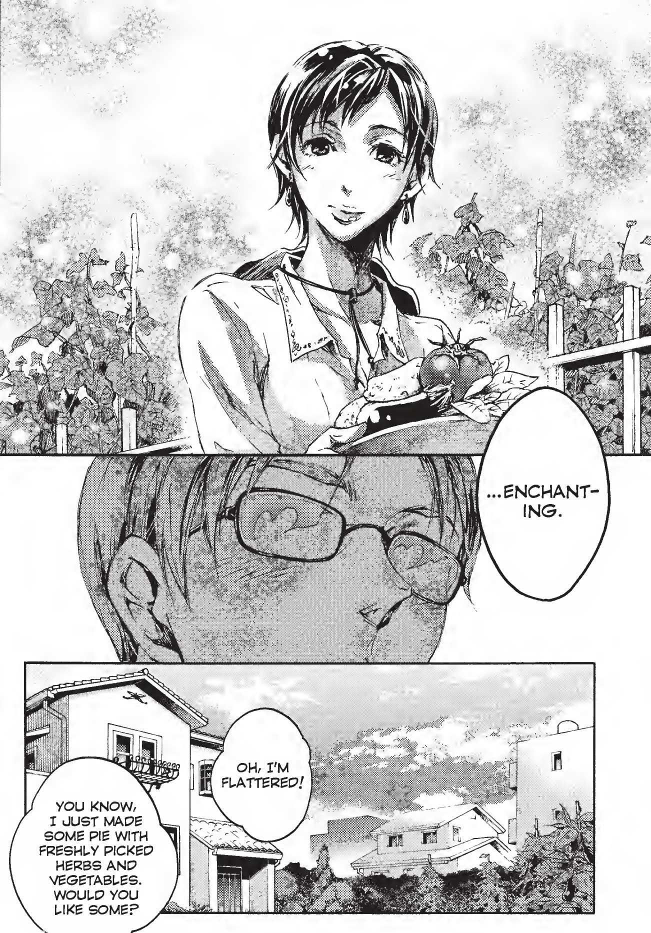

THERE YOU ARE!
STOMP STOMP
SERIOUSLY, *STOP* GOING OFF ON YOUR OWN!
WHEEZE WHEEZE
YOU KNOW I CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT YOU, AMANO-KUN!

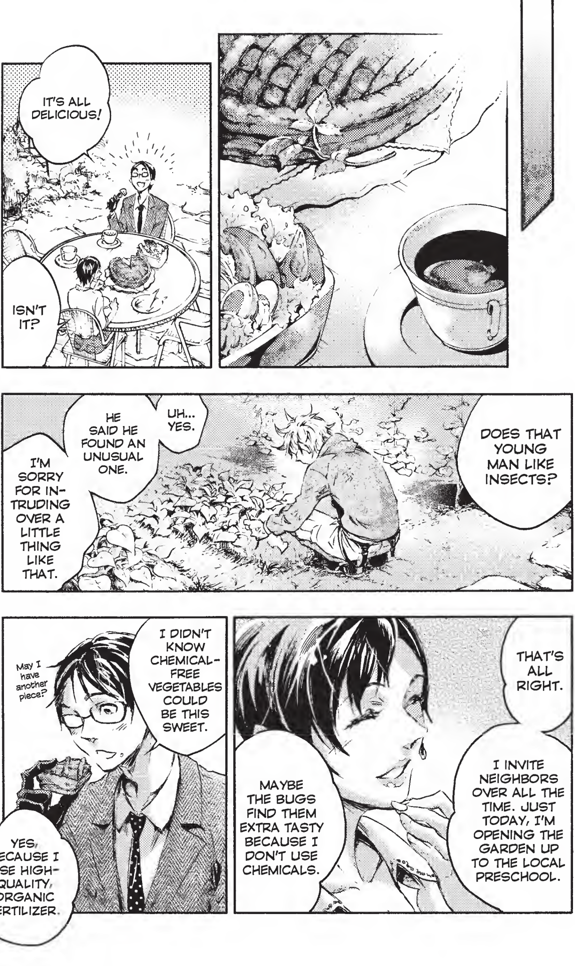

WHAT, ARE YOU CONFESSING YOUR LOVE TO ME?
That's really gross.
WRONG!
AND HEY, YOU FOUND ME FAST TODAY.
...I PUT A GPS TRACKER ON YOUR PHONE.
WHAT ARE YOU, A STALKER?
Seriously gross.
I DID IT BECAUSE YOU KEEP SHIRKING YOUR DUTIES TO PAINT GRAFFITI!
100% WRONG!
I'M DOING MY JOB, TOO.
fip
?
A leaf?
WHEN I WAS LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO PAINT,
I FOUND A LEAF WITH A *BUG* ON IT.
This?
I DON'T SEE ANY BUGS.

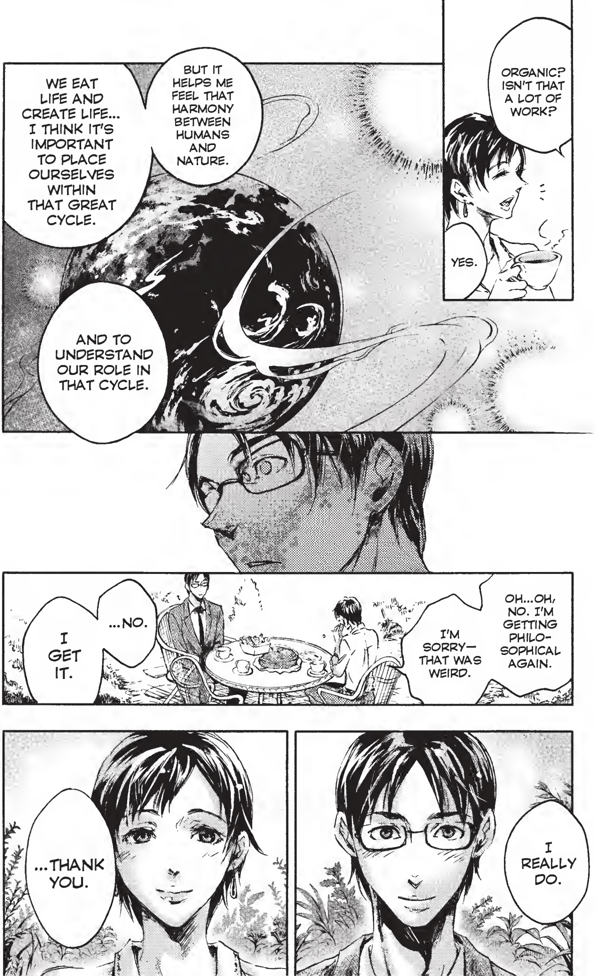

BECAUSE IT'S THE KIND ONLY *I* CAN SEE.

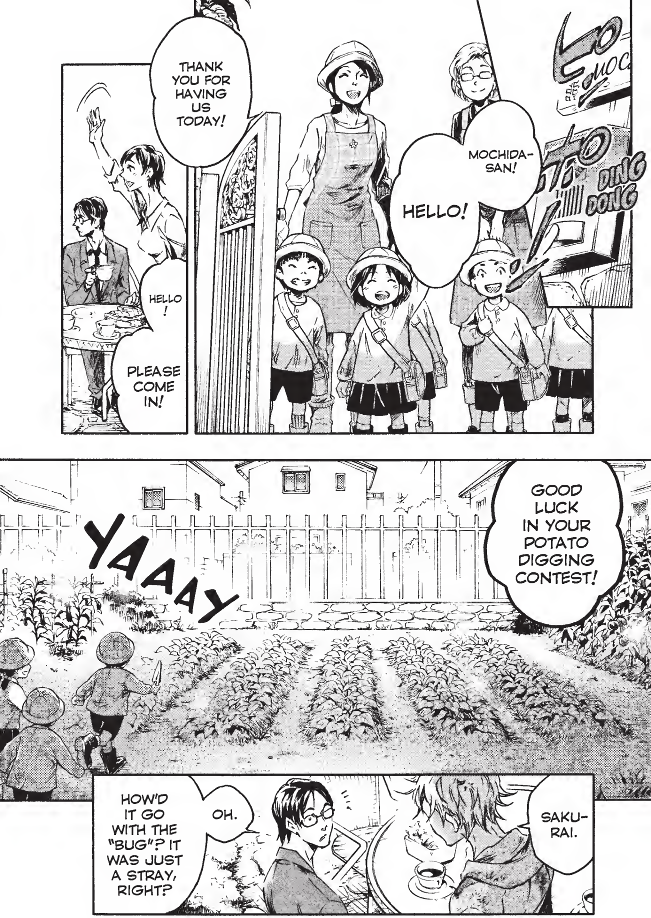


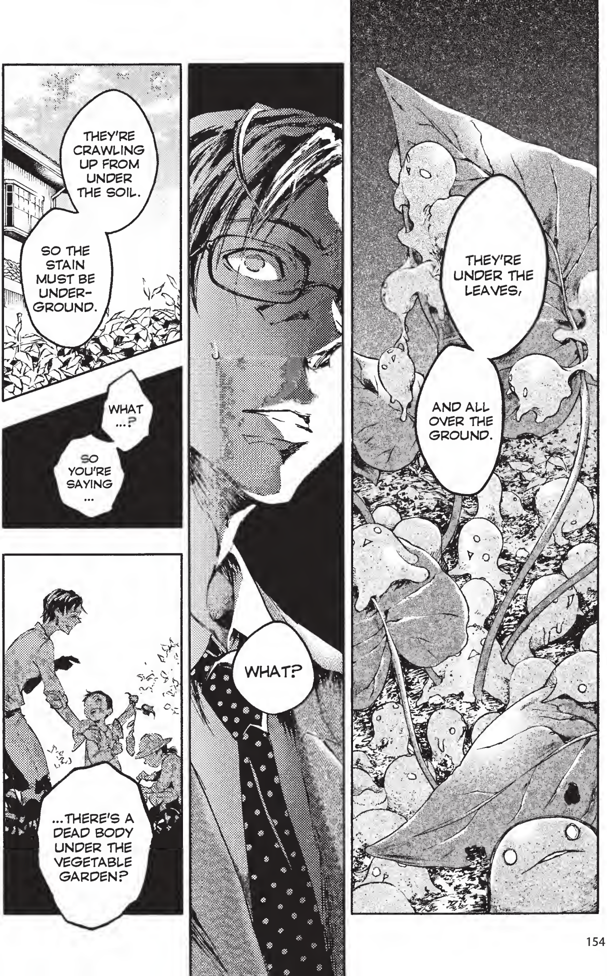

Oooh...
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN.
IT'S LIKE AN OASIS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN URBAN JUNGLE.
AND YOU SEE STAIN-BEASTS HERE?
Hmmm.
ACTUALLY, AT A GLANCE, I DON'T SEE ANY MORE.
MAYBE ONE WANDERED AWAY FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE AND ENDED UP HERE.
HELLO.
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY VEGETABLE GARDEN?
UH, NO, I JUST FIND IT A LITTLE...

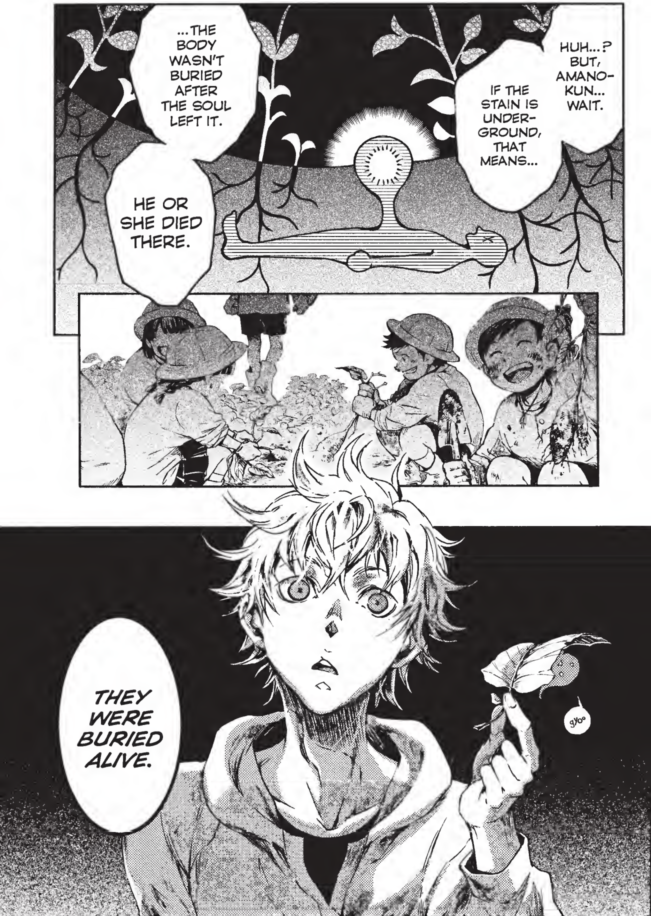

...ENCHANTING.
OH, I'M FLATTERED!
YOU KNOW, I JUST MADE SOME PIE WITH FRESHLY PICKED HERBS AND VEGETABLES. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?

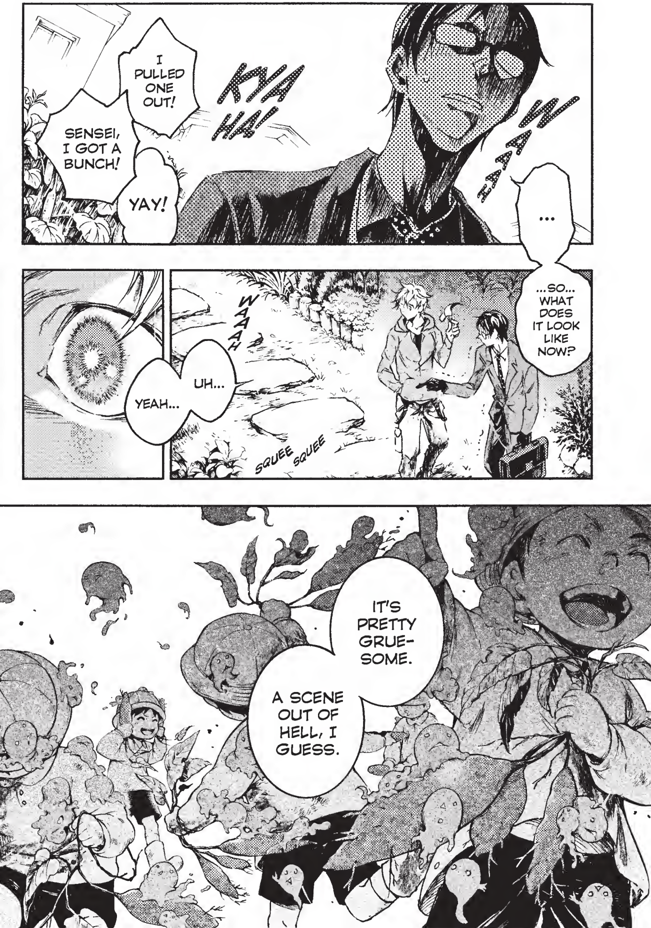

IT'S ALL DELICIOUS!
ISN'T IT?
DOES THAT YOUNG MAN LIKE INSECTS?
UH... YES.
HE SAID HE FOUND AN UNUSUAL ONE.
I'M SORRY FOR INTRUDING OVER A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
I INVITE NEIGHBORS OVER ALL THE TIME. JUST TODAY, I'M OPENING THE GARDEN UP TO THE LOCAL PRESCHOOL.
MAYBE THE BUGS FIND THEM EXTRA TASTY BECAUSE I DON'T USE CHEMICALS.
I DIDN'T KNOW CHEMICAL-FREE VEGETABLES COULD BE THIS SWEET.
May I have another piece?
YES, BECAUSE I USE HIGH-QUALITY, ORGANIC FERTILIZER.

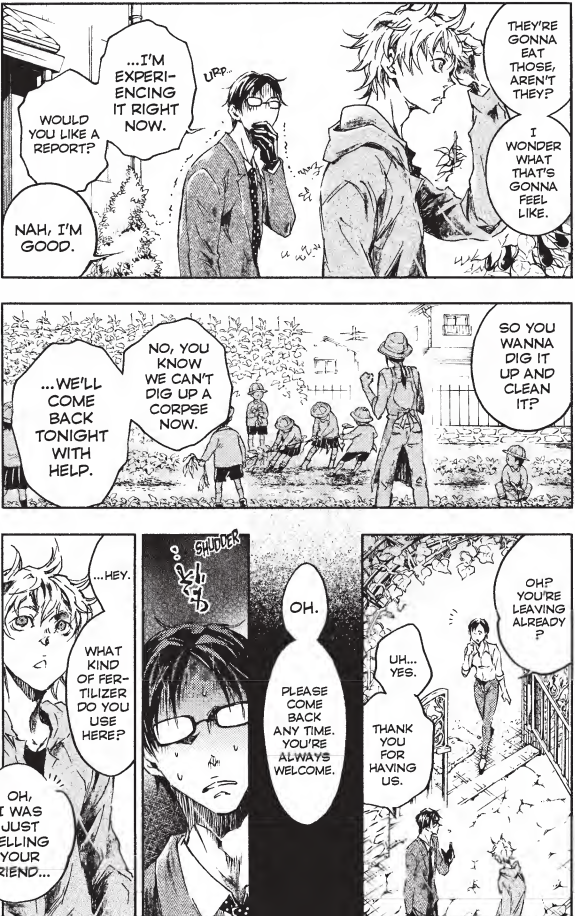

ORGANIC? ISN'T THAT A LOT OF WORK?
YES.
BUT IT HELPS ME FEEL THAT HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE.
WE EAT LIFE AND CREATE LIFE... I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO PLACE OURSELVES WITHIN THAT GREAT CYCLE.
AND TO UNDERSTAND OUR ROLE IN THAT CYCLE.
OH...OH, NO. I'M GETTING PHILOSOPHICAL AGAIN.
I'M SORRY—THAT WAS WEIRD.
...NO.
I GET IT.
I REALLY DO.
...THANK YOU.

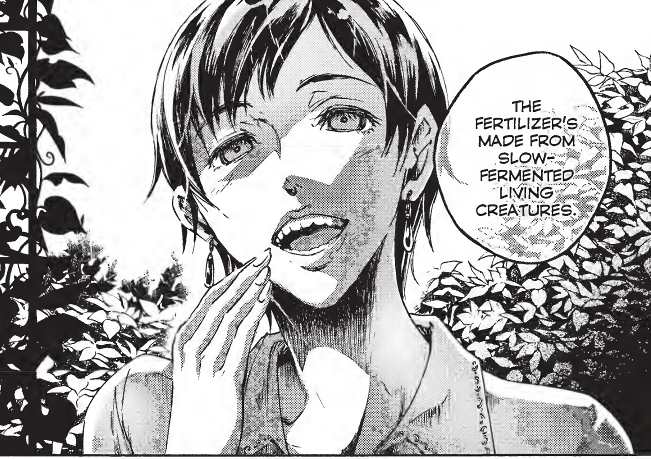

DING DONG
MOCHIDA-SAN!
HELLO!
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US TODAY!
HELLO!
PLEASE COME IN!
GOOD LUCK IN YOUR POTATO DIGGING CONTEST!
YAAAY
SAKU-RAI.
OH.
HOW'D IT GO WITH THE "BUG"? IT WAS JUST A STRAY, RIGHT?

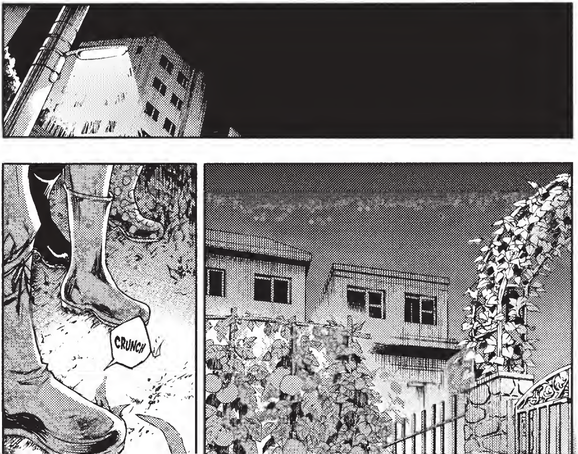

THEY'RE UNDER THE LEAVES,
AND ALL OVER THE GROUND.
WHAT?
THEY'RE CRAWLING UP FROM UNDER THE SOIL.
SO THE STAIN MUST BE UNDERGROUND.
WHAT ...?
SO YOU'RE SAYING ...
...THERE'S A DEAD BODY UNDER THE VEGETABLE GARDEN?

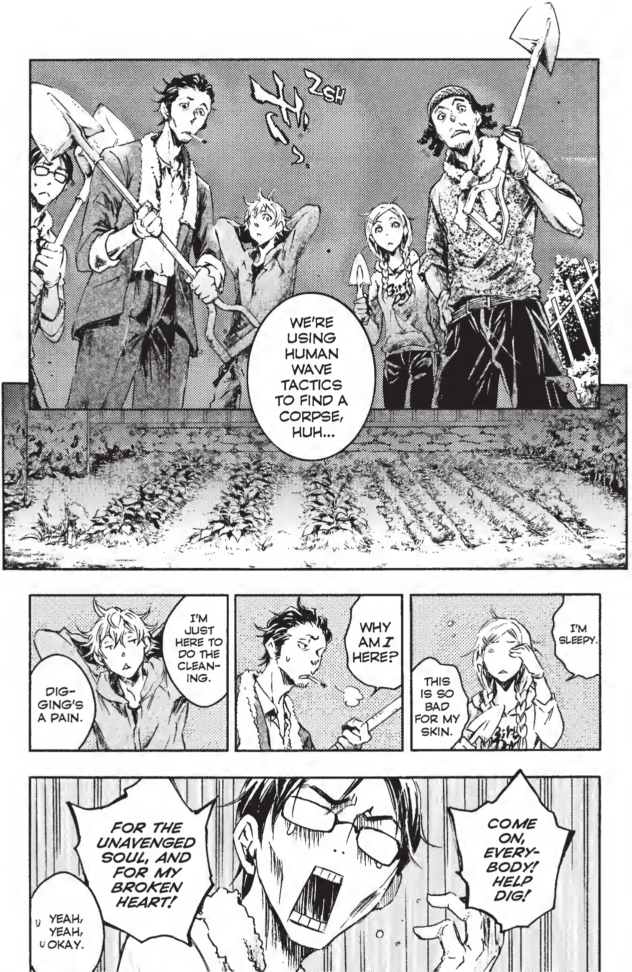

HUH...? BUT, AMANO-KUN... WAIT.
IF THE STAIN IS UNDERGROUND, THAT MEANS...
...THE BODY WASN'T BURIED AFTER THE SOUL LEFT IT.
HE OR SHE DIED THERE.
THEY WERE BURIED ALIVE.
gyoo

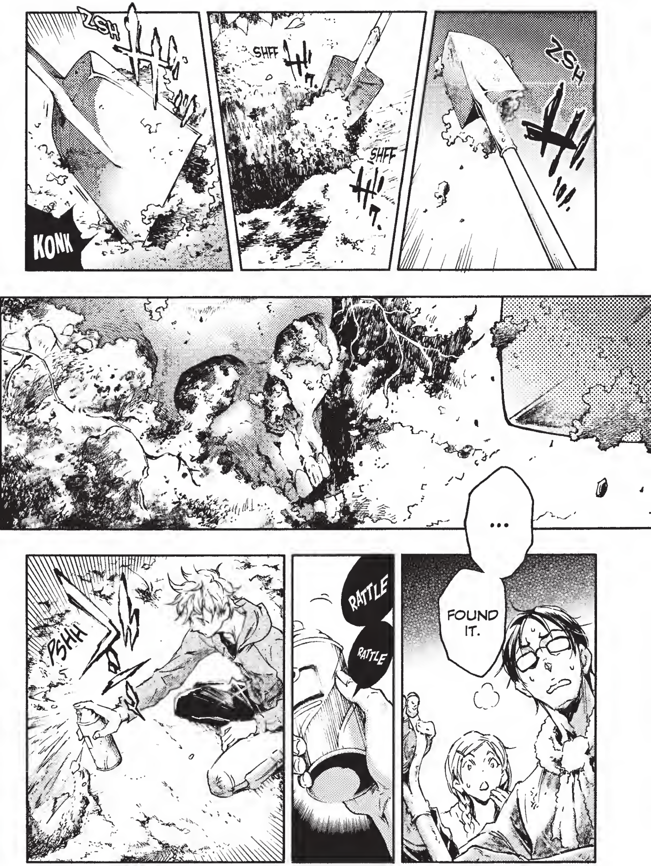

...
WAAAA
KYA HA!
I PULLED ONE OUT!
SENSEI, I GOT A BUNCH!
YAY!
...SO... WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE NOW?
WAAAH
SQUEE SQUEE
UH...
YEAH...
IT'S PRETTY GRUESOME.
A SCENE OUT OF HELL, I GUESS.

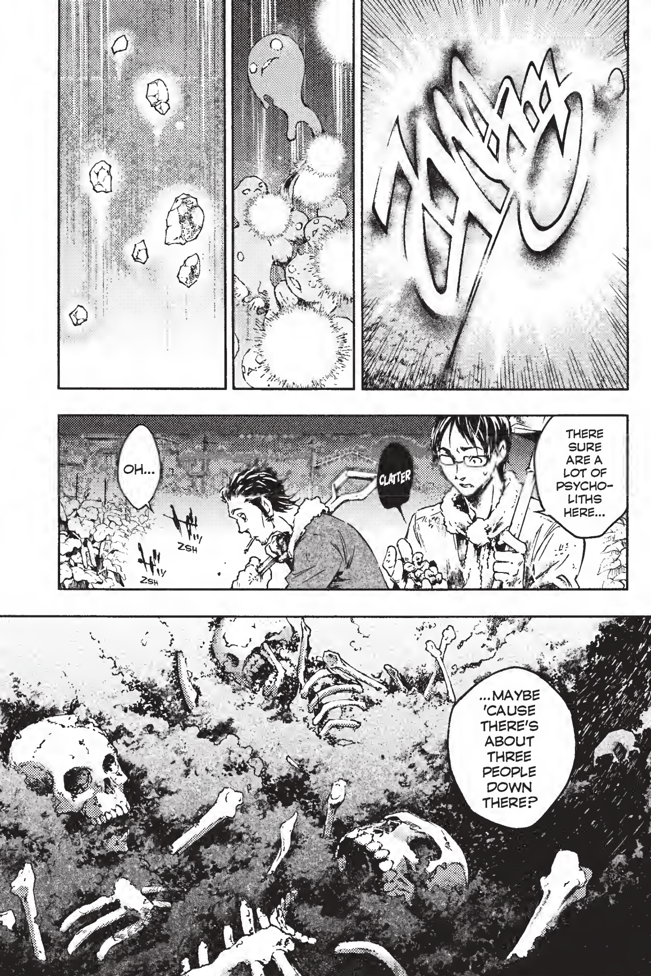

THEY'RE GONNA EAT THOSE, AREN'T THEY?
I WONDER WHAT THAT'S GONNA FEEL LIKE.
URP...
...I'M EXPERIENCING IT RIGHT NOW.
WOULD YOU LIKE A REPORT?
NAH, I'M GOOD.
SO YOU WANNA DIG IT UP AND CLEAN IT?
NO, YOU KNOW WE CAN'T DIG UP A CORPSE NOW.
...WE'LL COME BACK TONIGHT WITH HELP.
OH? YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?
UH... YES.
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US.
SHUDDER
OH.
PLEASE COME BACK ANY TIME. YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME.
...HEY.
WHAT KIND OF FERTILIZER DO YOU USE HERE?
OH, I WAS JUST TELLING YOUR FRIEND...

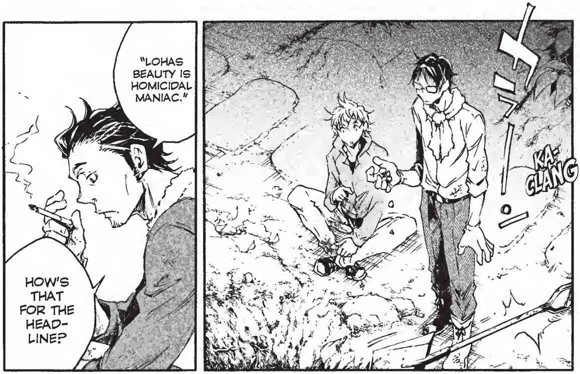

THE FERTILIZER'S MADE FROM SLOW-FERMENTED LIVING CREATURES.

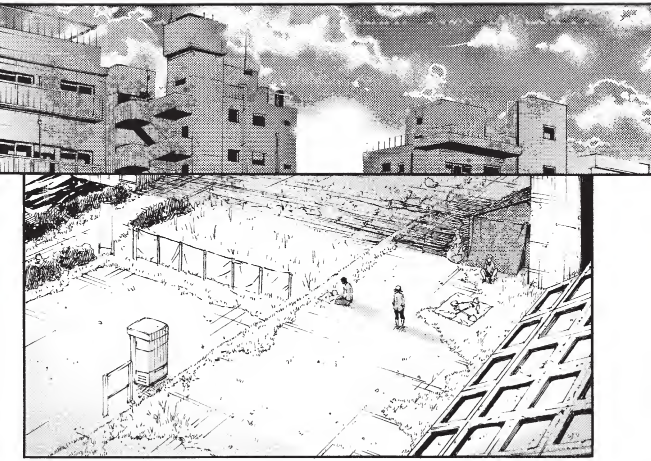

CRUNCH

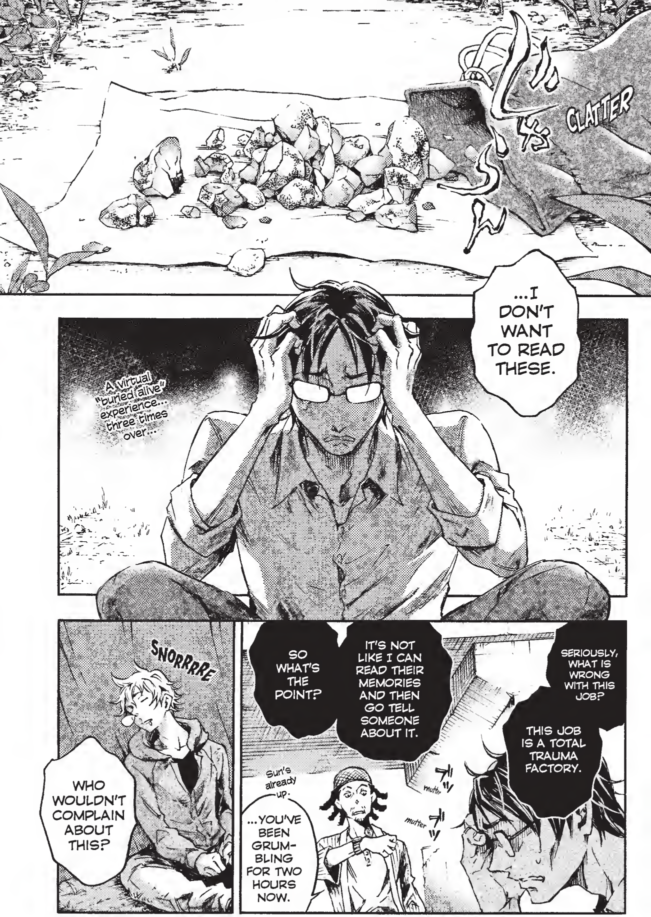

ZSH
WE'RE USING HUMAN WAVE TACTICS TO FIND A CORPSE, HUH...
I'M SLEEPY.
THIS IS SO BAD FOR MY SKIN.
WHY AM *I* HERE?
I'M JUST HERE TO DO THE CLEANING.
DIGGING'S A PAIN.
COME ON, EVERYBODY! HELP DIG!
FOR THE UNAVENGED SOUL, AND FOR MY BROKEN HEART!
YEAH, YEAH, OKAY.

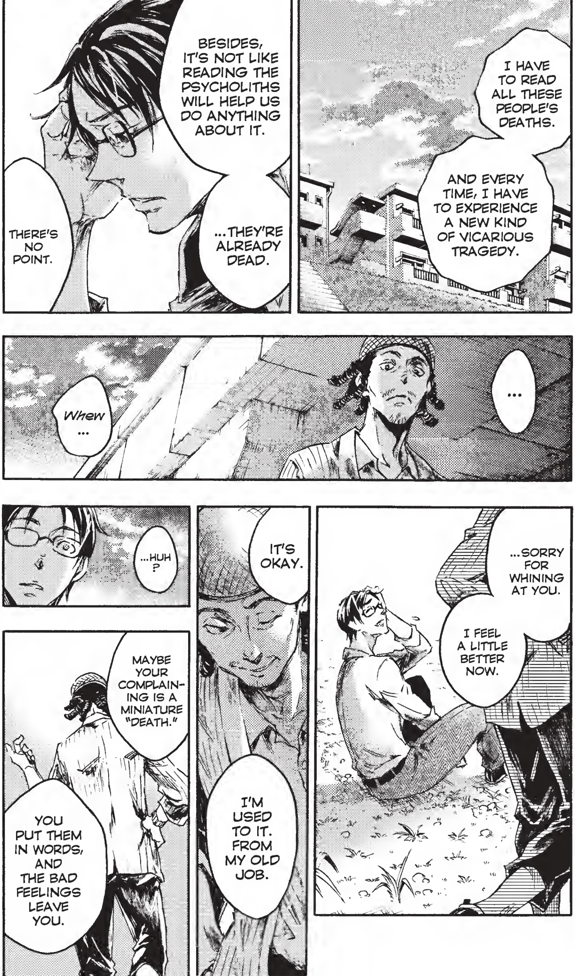

ZSH
SHFF
SHFF
ZSH
KONK
...
FOUND IT.
RATTLE
RATTLE
PSHH

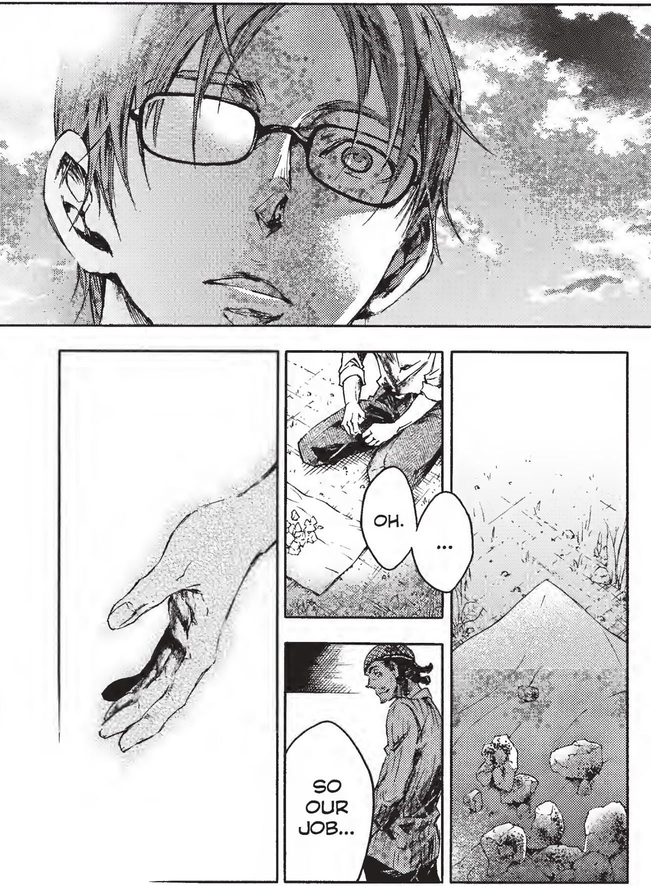

THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF PSYCHOLITHS HERE...
CLATTER
OH...
ZSH
ZSH
...MAYBE 'CAUSE THERE'S ABOUT THREE PEOPLE DOWN THERE?

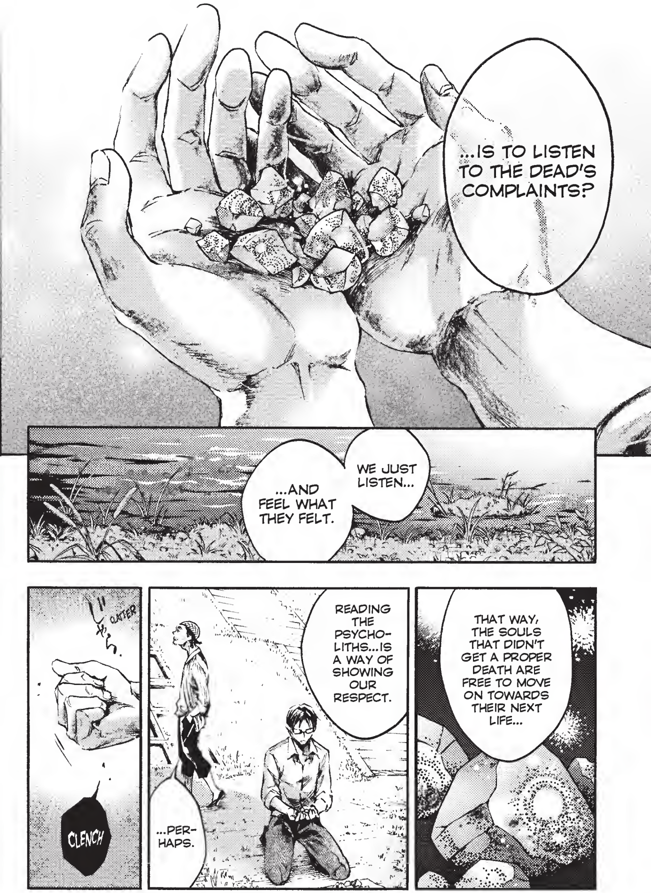

KA-CLANG
"LOHAS BEAUTY IS HOMICIDAL MANIAC."
HOW'S THAT FOR THE HEADLINE?

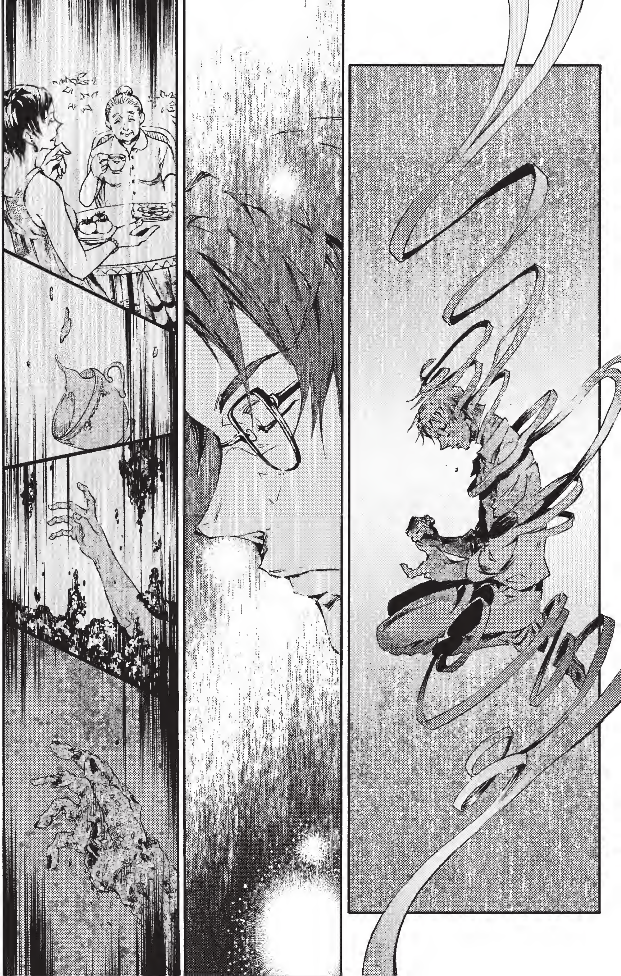


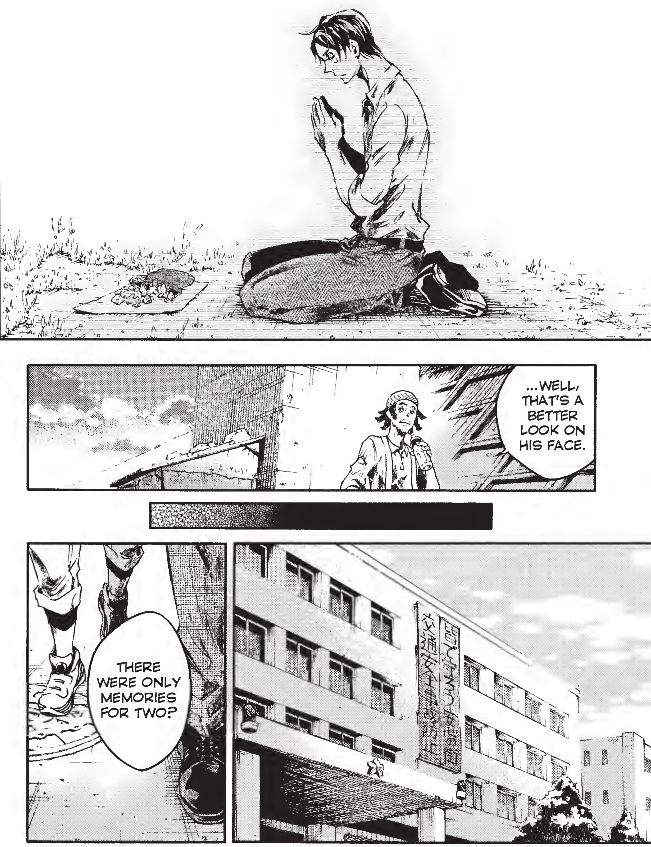

CLATTER
...I DON'T WANT TO READ THESE.
A virtual "buried alive" experience... three times over...
SERIOUSLY, WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS JOB?
THIS JOB IS A TOTAL TRAUMA FACTORY.
IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN READ THEIR MEMORIES AND THEN GO TELL SOMEONE ABOUT IT.
SO WHAT'S THE POINT?
mutter
mutter
Sun's already up.
...YOU'VE BEEN GRUMBLING FOR TWO HOURS NOW.
SNORRRRE
WHO WOULDN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS?


I HAVE TO READ ALL THESE PEOPLE'S DEATHS.
AND EVERY TIME, I HAVE TO EXPERIENCE A NEW KIND OF VICARIOUS TRAGEDY.
BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE READING THE PSYCHOLITHS WILL HELP US DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
...THEY'RE ALREADY DEAD.
THERE'S NO POINT.
...
Whew ...
...SORRY FOR WHINING AT YOU.
I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER NOW.
IT'S OKAY.
...HUH?
I'M USED TO IT. FROM MY OLD JOB.
MAYBE YOUR COMPLAINING IS A MINIATURE "DEATH."
YOU PUT THEM IN WORDS, AND THE BAD FEELINGS LEAVE YOU.

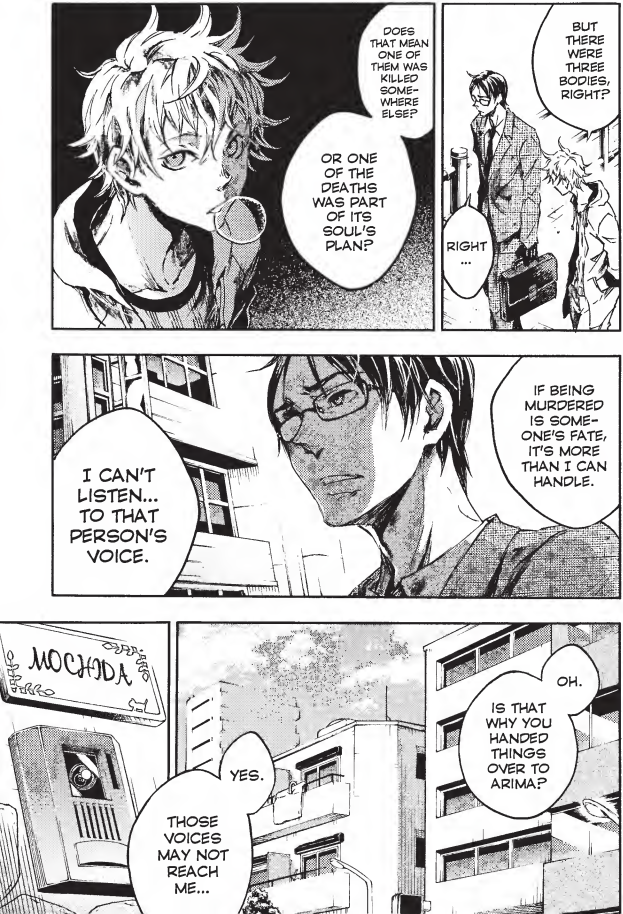

…
OH.
SO OUR JOB…

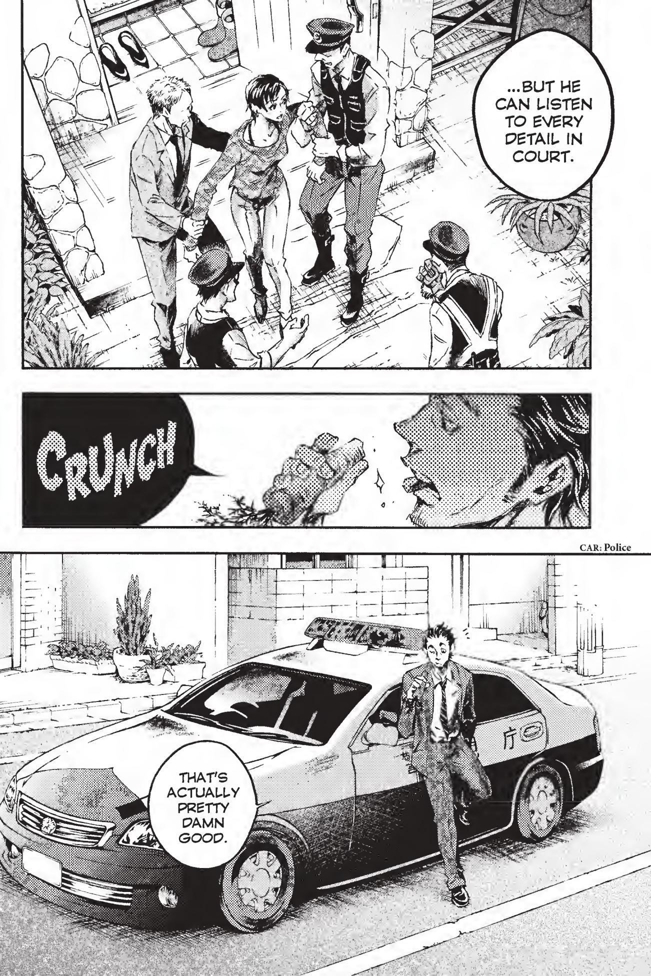

...IS TO LISTEN TO THE DEAD'S COMPLAINTS?
WE JUST LISTEN...
...AND FEEL WHAT THEY FELT.
THAT WAY, THE SOULS THAT DIDN'T GET A PROPER DEATH ARE FREE TO MOVE ON TOWARDS THEIR NEXT LIFE...
READING THE PSYCHOLITHS...IS A WAY OF SHOWING OUR RESPECT.
...PERHAPS.
CLATTER
CLENCH




...WELL, THAT'S A BETTER LOOK ON HIS FACE.
THERE WERE ONLY MEMORIES FOR TWO?

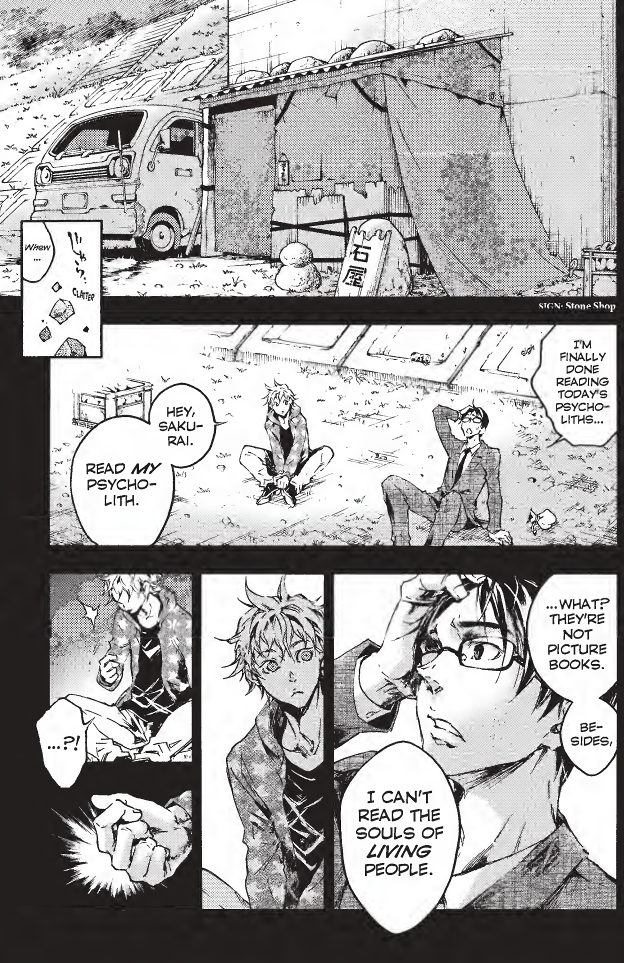
SIGN (RIGHT): Let's all protect the safety of our town!
SIGN (RIGHT): Traffic Safety, Accident Prevention


BUT THERE WERE THREE BODIES, RIGHT?
RIGHT...
DOES THAT MEAN ONE OF THEM WAS KILLED SOMEWHERE ELSE?
OR ONE OF THE DEATHS WAS PART OF ITS SOUL'S PLAN?
IF BEING MURDERED IS SOMEONE'S FATE, IT'S MORE THAN I CAN HANDLE.
I CAN'T LISTEN... TO THAT PERSON'S VOICE.
OH.
IS THAT WHY YOU HANDED THINGS OVER TO ARIMA?
YES.
THOSE VOICES MAY NOT REACH ME...
MOCHIDA

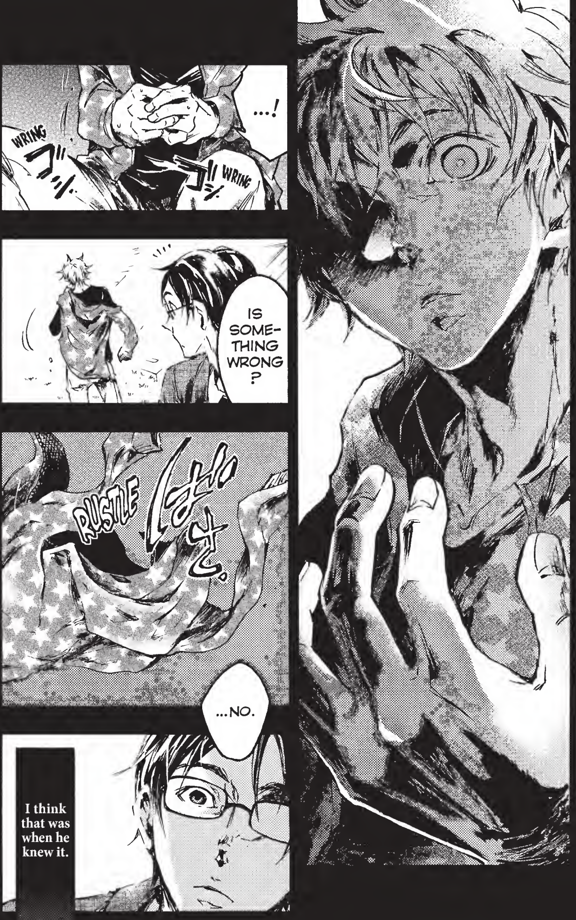

...BUT HE CAN LISTEN TO EVERY DETAIL IN COURT.
CRUNCH
THAT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY DAMN GOOD.

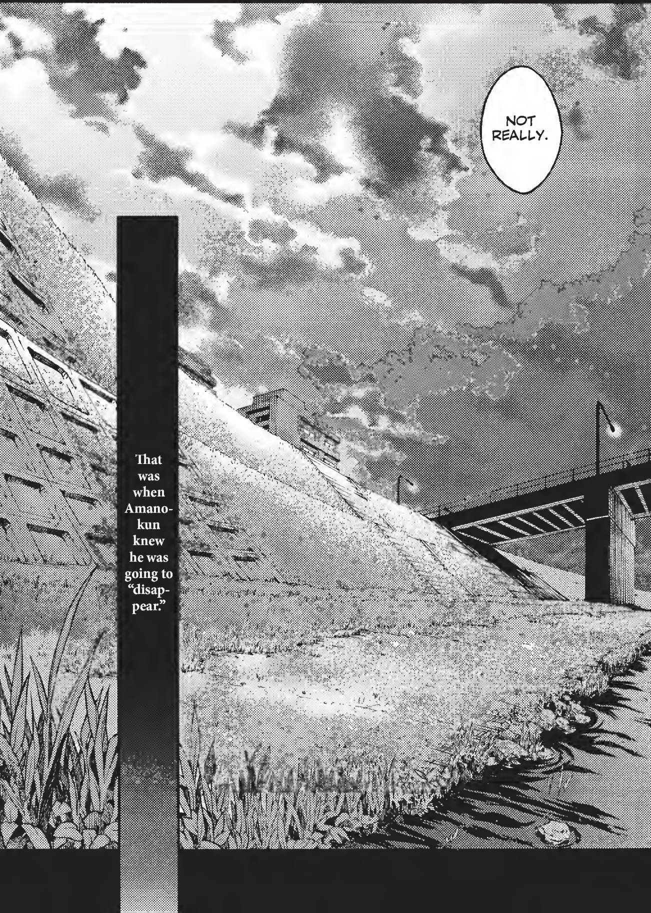
CAR: Police

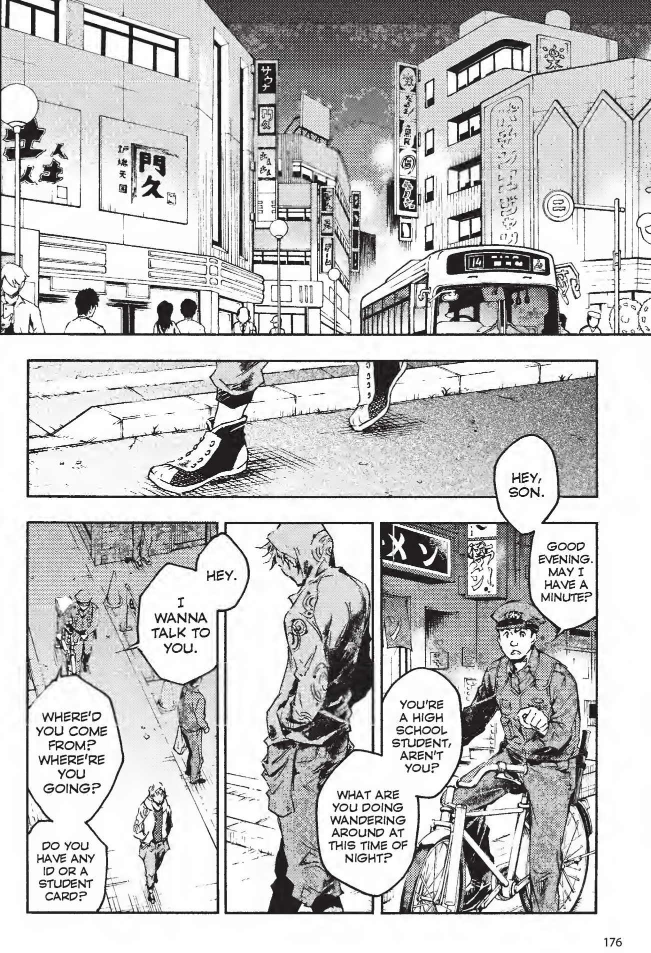
Chapter 17 ✚ What the Tool Has to Say

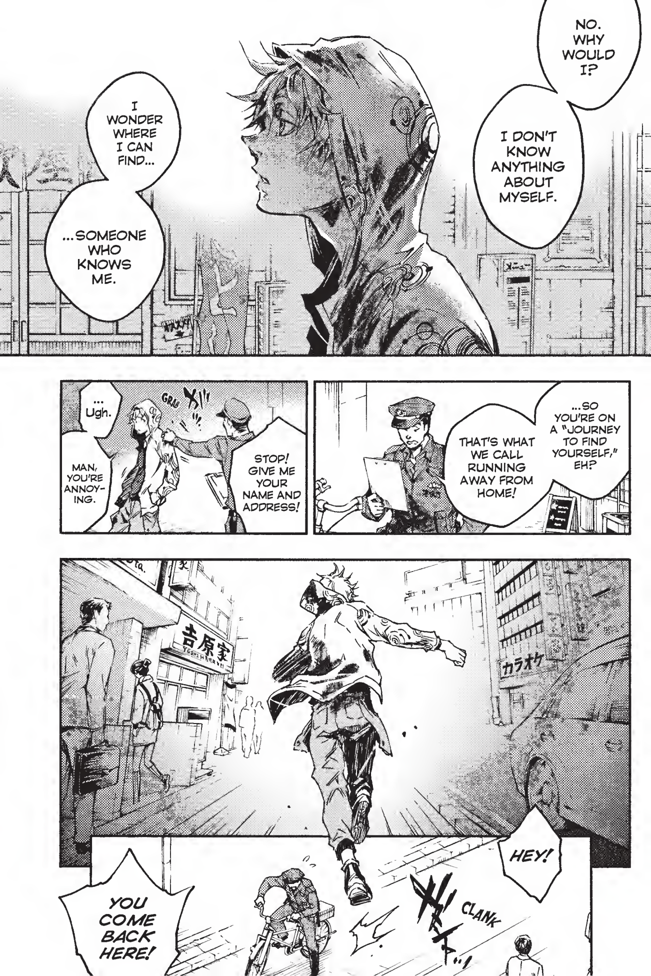

石屋
Whew ...
じゃら…
CLATTER
I'M FINALLY DONE READING TODAY'S PSYCHOLITHS...
sigh
HEY, SAKURAI.
READ *MY* PSYCHOLITH.
...WHAT? THEY'RE NOT PICTURE BOOKS.
BESIDES,
I CAN'T READ THE SOULS OF *LIVING* PEOPLE.
...?!

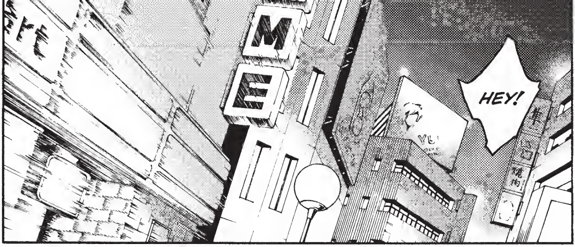
SIGN: Stone Shop

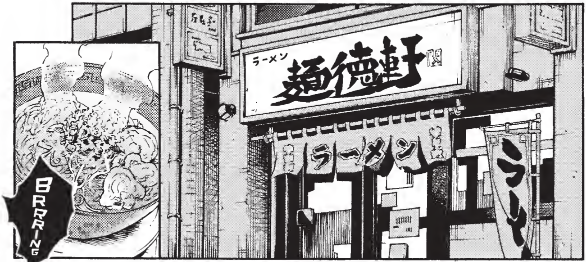

...!
WRING
WRING
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
RUSTLE
...NO.
I think that was when he knew it.


NOT REALLY.
That was when Amano-kun knew he was going to "disappear."

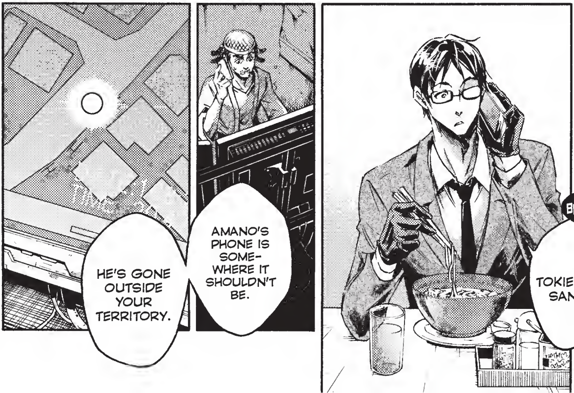

サウナ
門久
炉端天国
門久
14
HEY, SON.
GOOD EVENING. MAY I HAVE A MINUTE?
YOU'RE A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WANDERING AROUND AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?
HEY.
I WANNA TALK TO YOU.
WHERE'D YOU COME FROM? WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
DO YOU HAVE ANY ID OR A STUDENT CARD?

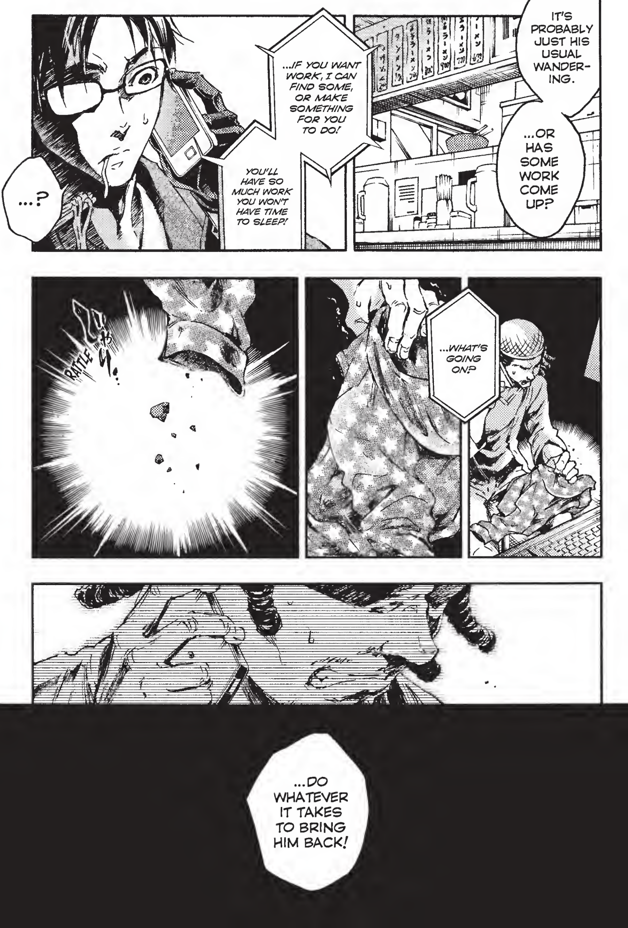

NO. WHY WOULD I?
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MYSELF.
I WONDER WHERE I CAN FIND...
...SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ME.
...SO YOU'RE ON A "JOURNEY TO FIND YOURSELF," EH?
THAT'S WHAT WE CALL RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME!
STOP! GIVE ME YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS!
GRAB
... Ugh.
MAN, YOU'RE ANNOYING.
カラオケ
吉原家
HEY!
CLANK
YOU COME BACK HERE!

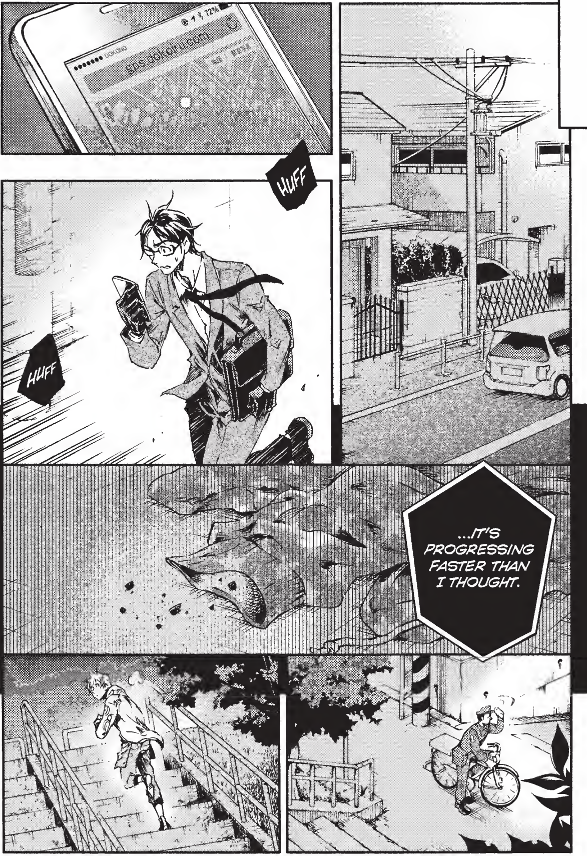


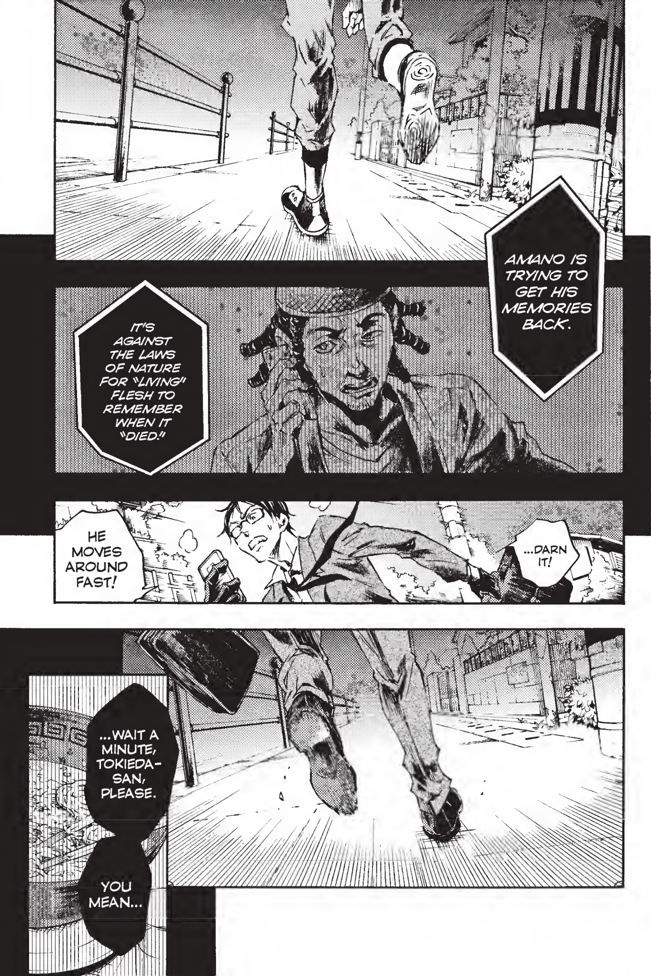

ラーメン
麺徳軒
ラーメン
BRRRING

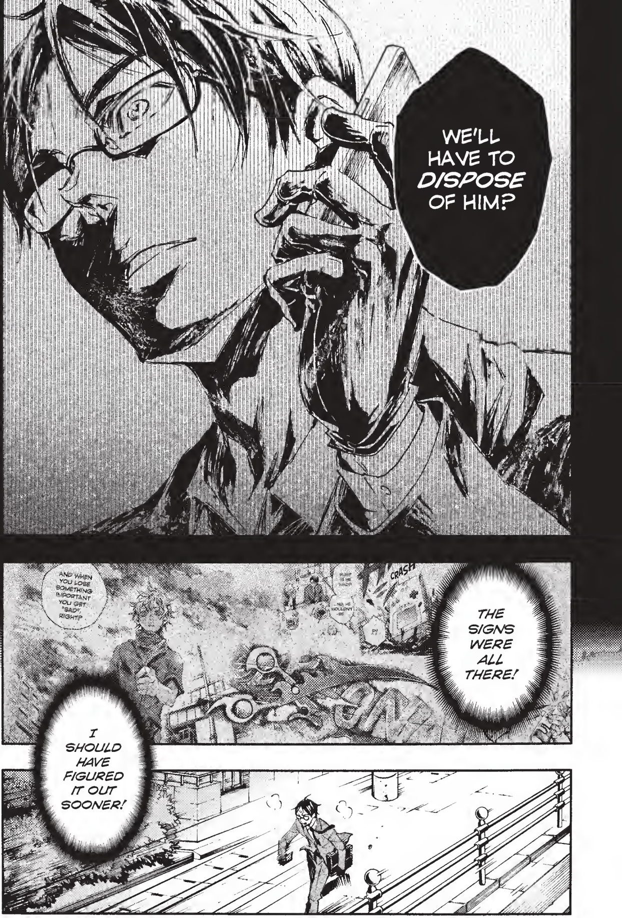
SIGN (TOP): Ramen Mentokken **SIGN (BOTTOM):** Ramen

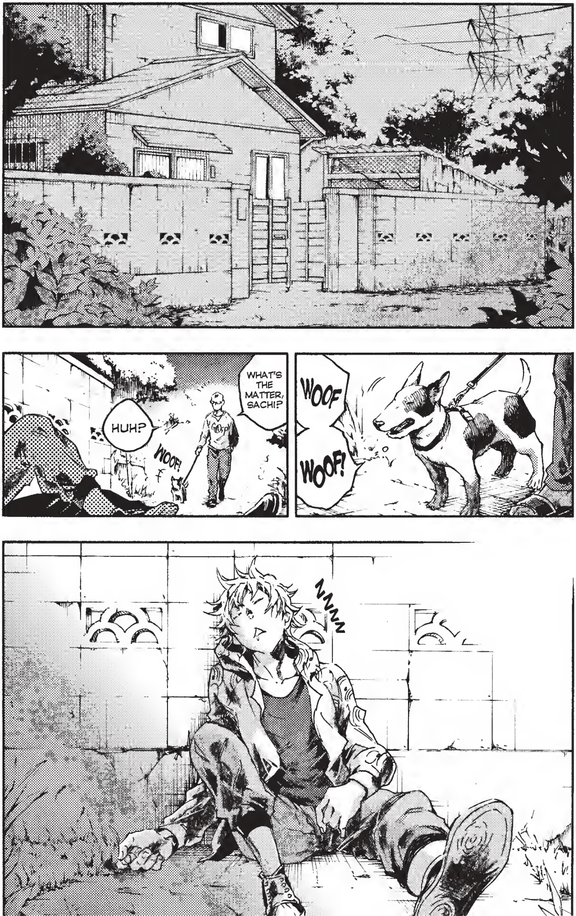

BEEP
TOKIEDA-SAN?
AMANO'S PHONE IS SOMEWHERE IT SHOULDN'T BE.
HE'S GONE OUTSIDE YOUR TERRITORY.

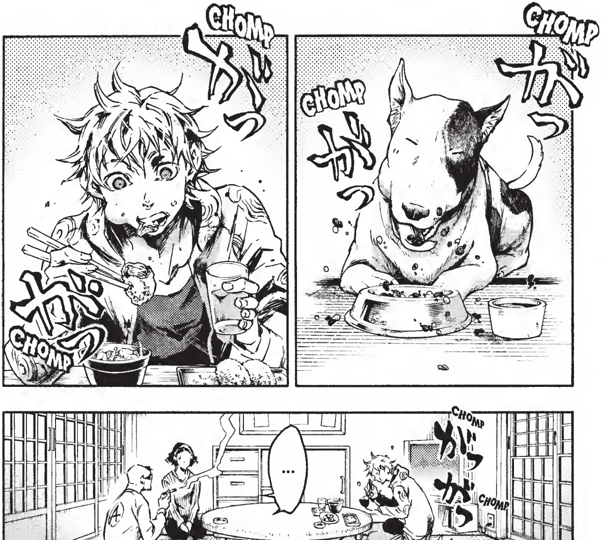

IT'S PROBABLY JUST HIS USUAL WANDERING.
...OR HAS SOME WORK COME UP?
...IF YOU WANT WORK, I CAN FIND SOME, OR MAKE SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DO!
YOU'LL HAVE SO MUCH WORK YOU WON'T HAVE TIME TO SLEEP!
...?
...WHAT'S GOING ON?
RATTLE
...DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO BRING HIM BACK!

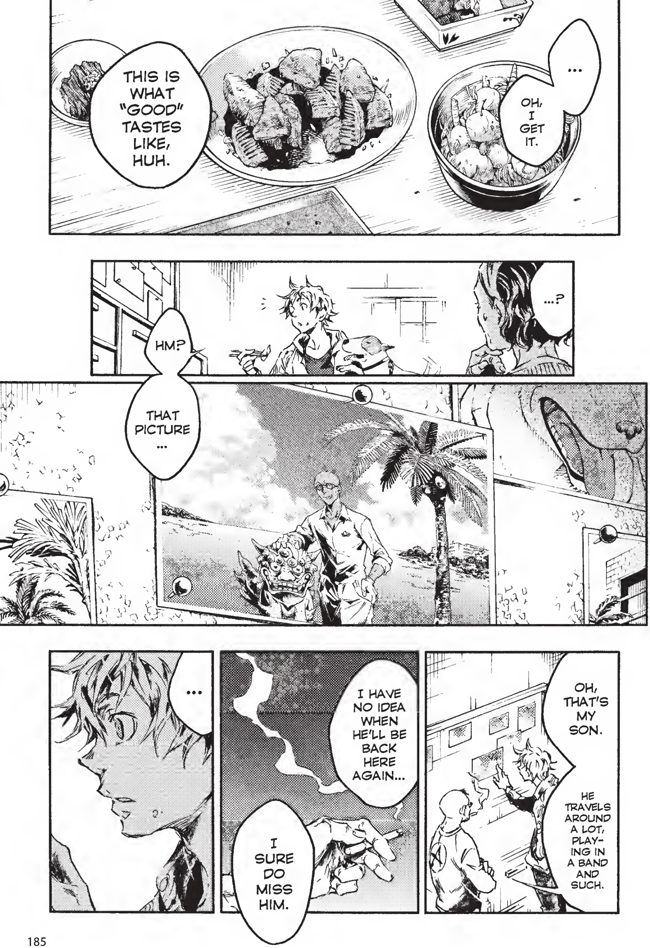

sns.dokoru.com
DOKONO
72%
HUFF
HUFF
...IT'S PROGRESSING FASTER THAN I THOUGHT.

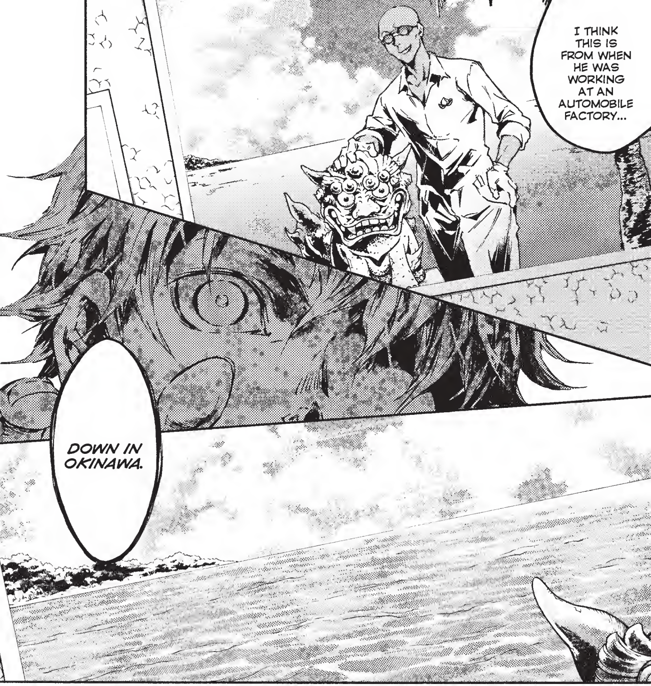

AMANO IS TRYING TO GET HIS MEMORIES BACK.
IT'S AGAINST THE LAWS OF NATURE FOR "LIVING" FLESH TO REMEMBER WHEN IT "DIED."
...DARN IT!
HE MOVES AROUND FAST!
...WAIT A MINUTE, TOKIEDA-SAN, PLEASE.
YOU MEAN...

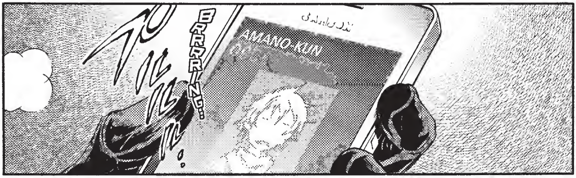

WE'LL HAVE TO *DISPOSE* OF HIM?
THE SIGNS WERE ALL THERE!
CRASH
HUH? IS HE MAD?
...NO, HE WOULDN'T BE
?!
AND WHEN YOU LOSE SOMETHING IMPORTANT YOU GET "SAD", RIGHT?
I SHOULD HAVE FIGURED IT OUT SOONER!

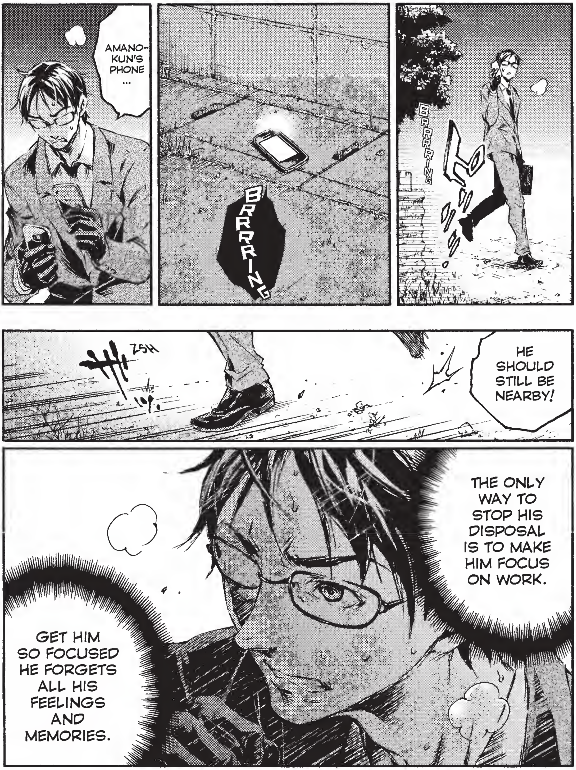

WOOF
WOOF!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, SACHI?
HUH?
WOOF!
NNNN


CHOMP
がっ
CHOMP
がっ
CHOMP
がっ
CHOMP
がぶっ
...
CHOMP
がっ
がつ
CHOMP
...SAY, DEAR.
HE'S A RUN-AWAY, ISN'T HE?
MAYBE WE SHOULD ASK THE POLICE TO...?
HE SAYS HE'S FINE, SO HE'S FINE.
BUT HE SURE DOES EAT A LOT.
IS THE FOOD THAT GOOD, SON?

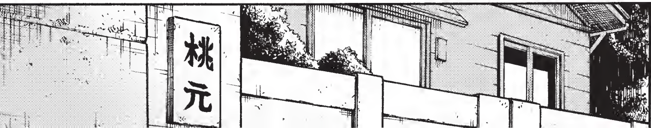

...
OH, I GET IT.
THIS IS WHAT "GOOD" TASTES LIKE, HUH.
...?
HM?
THAT PICTURE ...
OH, THAT'S MY SON.
HE TRAVELS AROUND A LOT, PLAYING IN A BAND AND SUCH.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHEN HE'LL BE BACK HERE AGAIN...
I SURE DO MISS HIM.
...

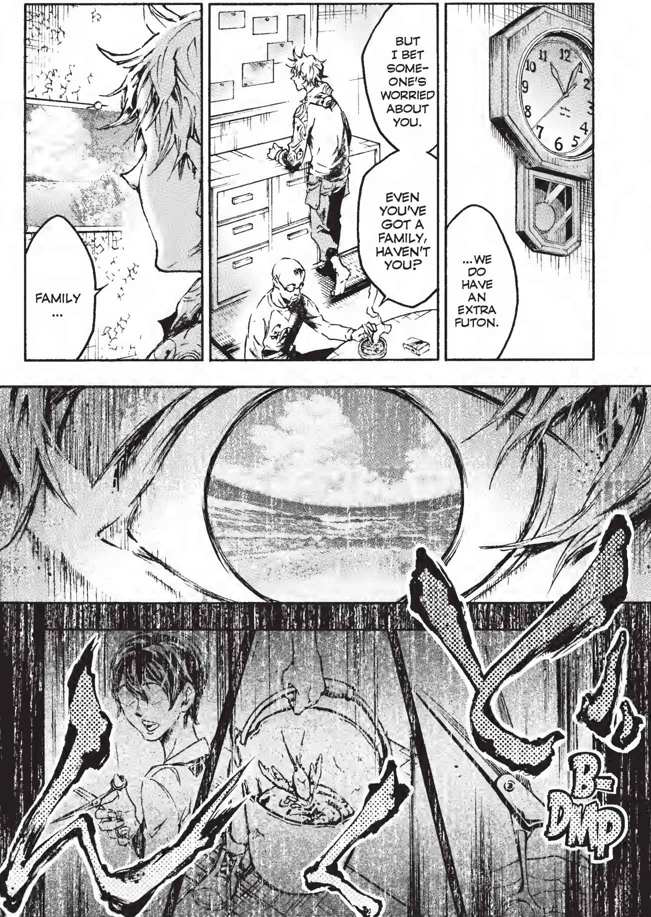

I THINK THIS IS FROM WHEN HE WAS WORKING AT AN AUTOMOBILE FACTORY...
DOWN IN OKINAWA.

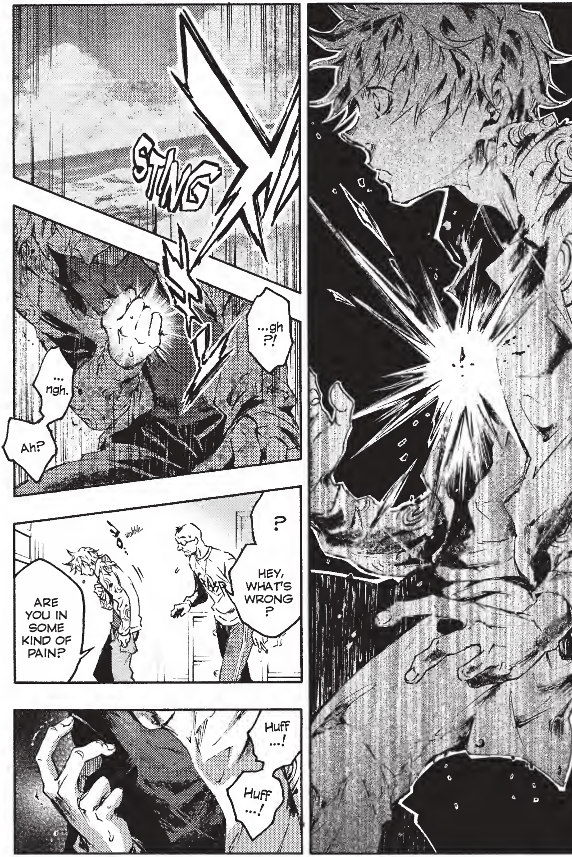

ブルルル
BRRRRING...
AMANO-KUN

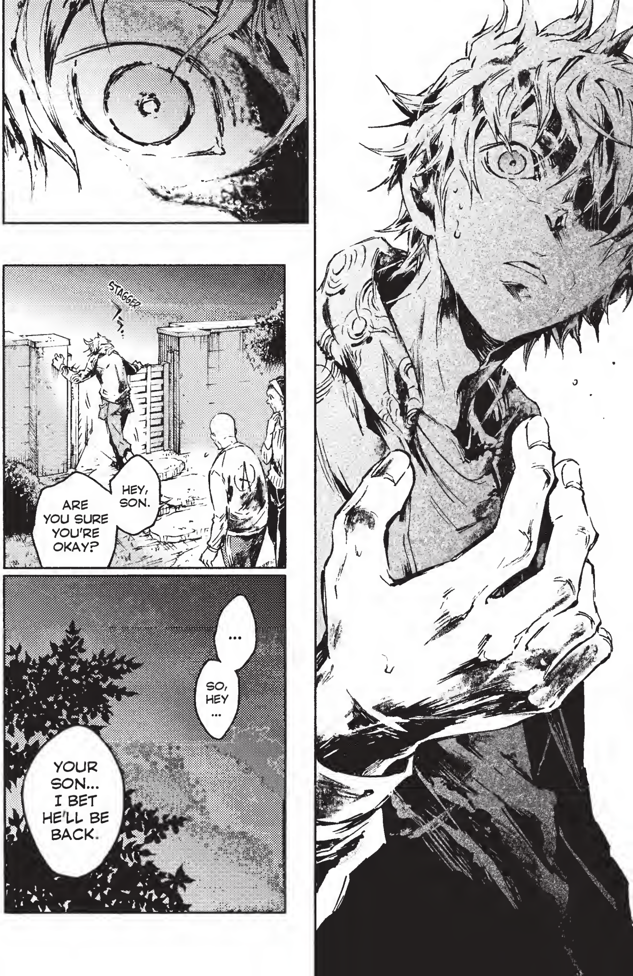

BRRRRING
BRRRRING
AMANO-KUN'S PHONE ...
ZSH
HE SHOULD STILL BE NEARBY!
THE ONLY WAY TO STOP HIS DISPOSAL IS TO MAKE HIM FOCUS ON WORK.
GET HIM SO FOCUSED HE FORGETS ALL HIS FEELINGS AND MEMORIES.

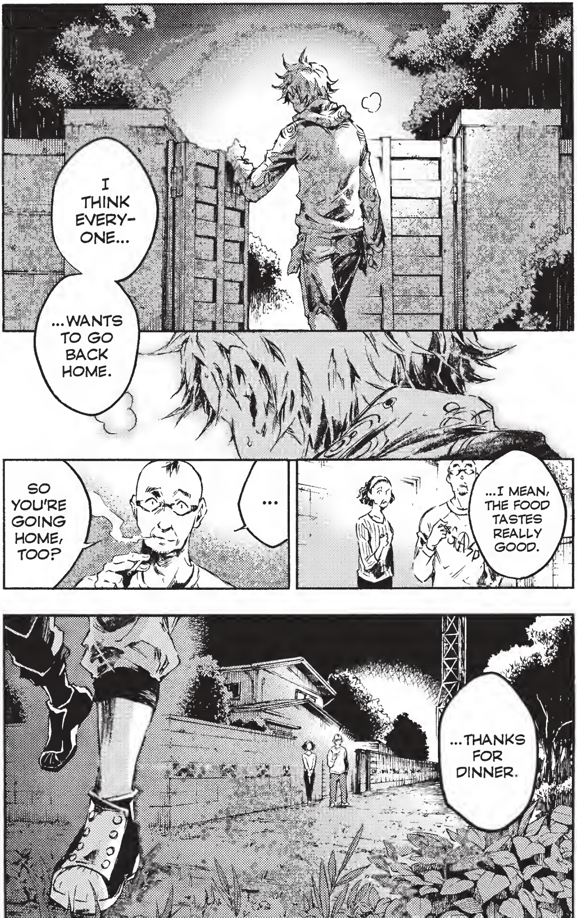
NAMEPLATE: Tōgen

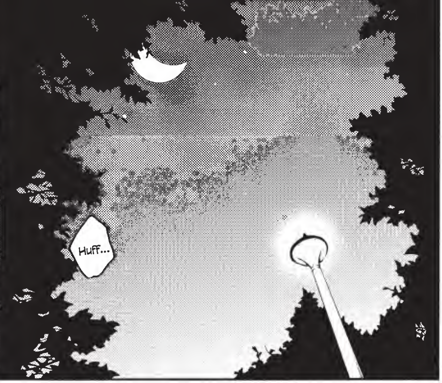


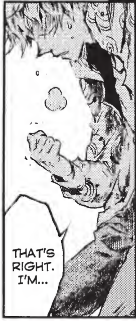

...WE DO HAVE AN EXTRA FUTON.
BUT I BET SOMEONE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
EVEN YOU'VE GOT A FAMILY, HAVEN'T YOU?
FAMILY ...
B-DMP

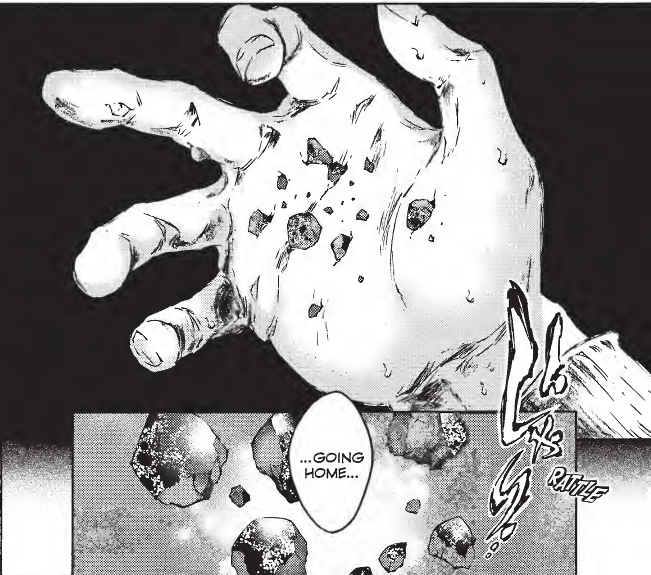

STING
...gh ?!
... ngh.
Ah?
?
wobble...
HEY, WHAT'S WRONG?
ARE YOU IN SOME KIND OF PAIN?
Huff ...!
Huff ...!

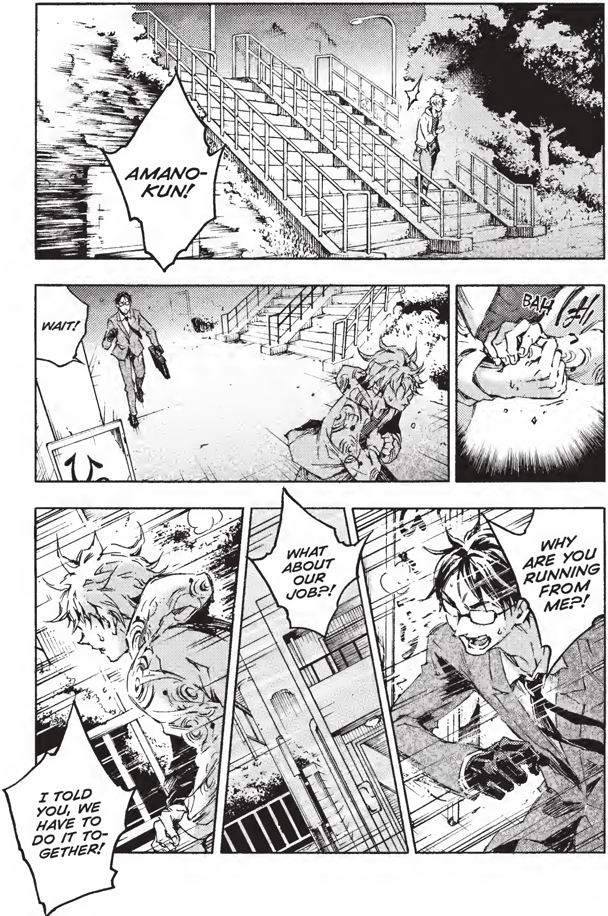

STAGGER
HEY, SON.
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?
...
SO, HEY ...
YOUR SON... I BET HE'LL BE BACK.

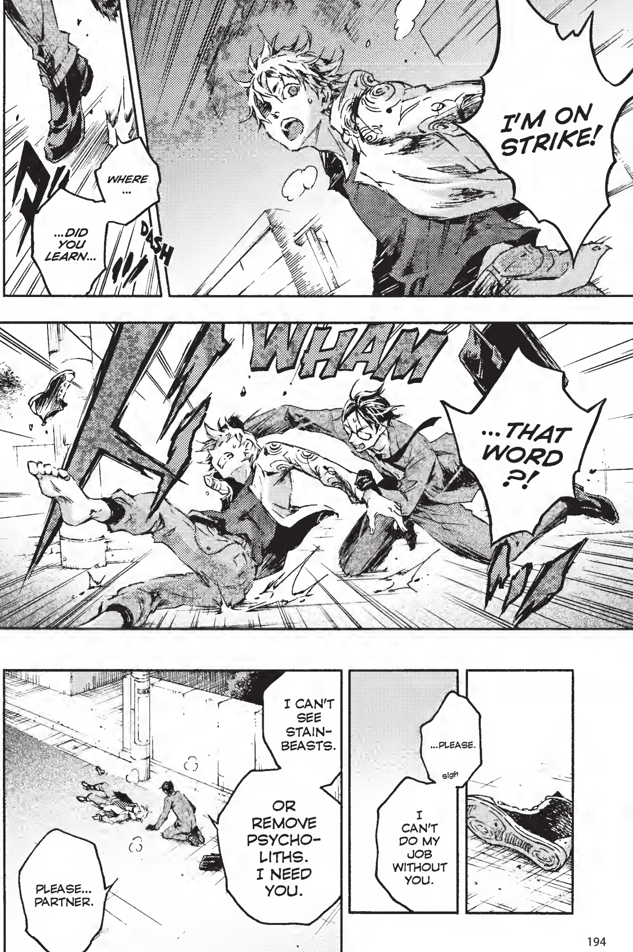

I THINK EVERYONE...
...WANTS TO GO BACK HOME.
...I MEAN, THE FOOD TASTES REALLY GOOD.
...
SO YOU'RE GOING HOME, TOO?
...THANKS FOR DINNER.

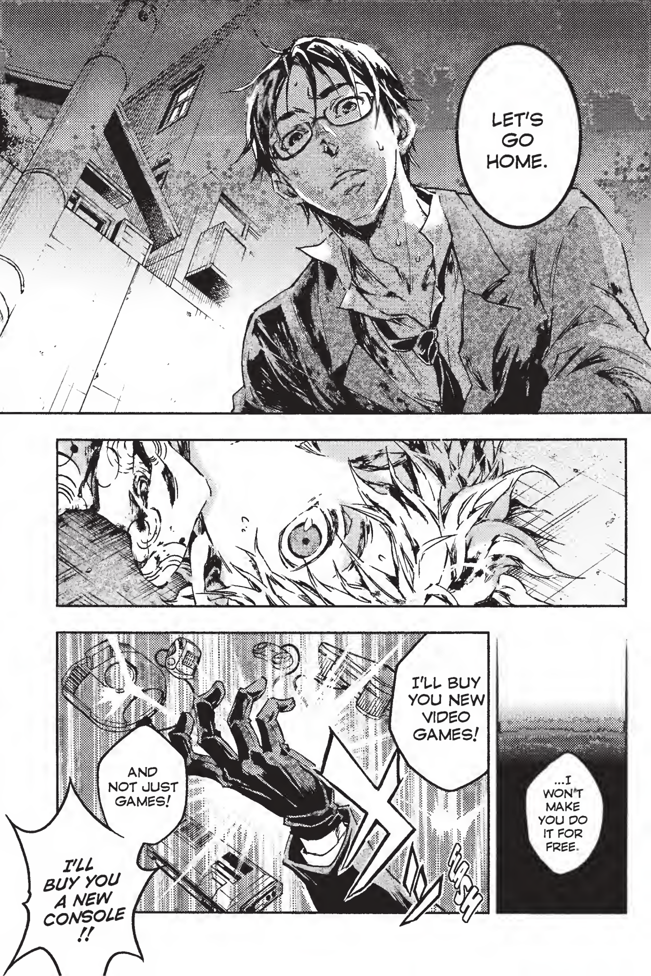

Huff...

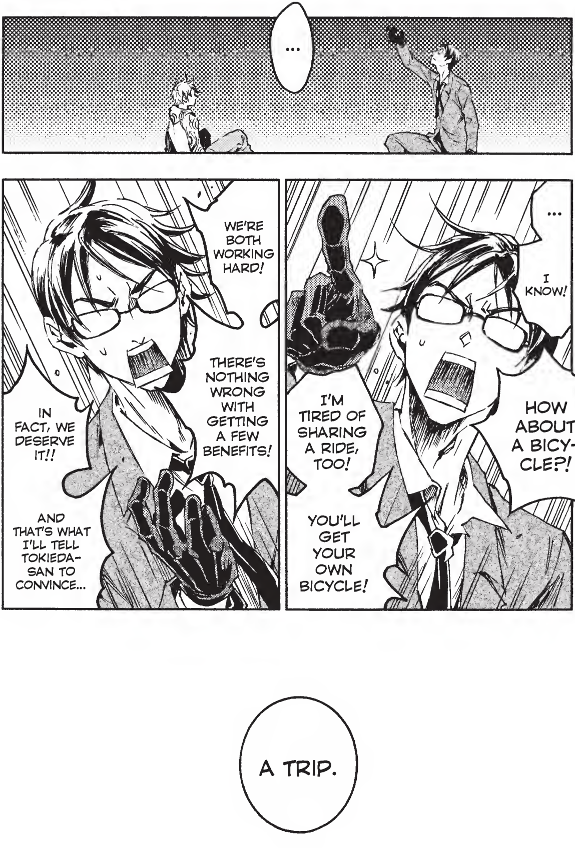

THAT'S RIGHT. I'M...

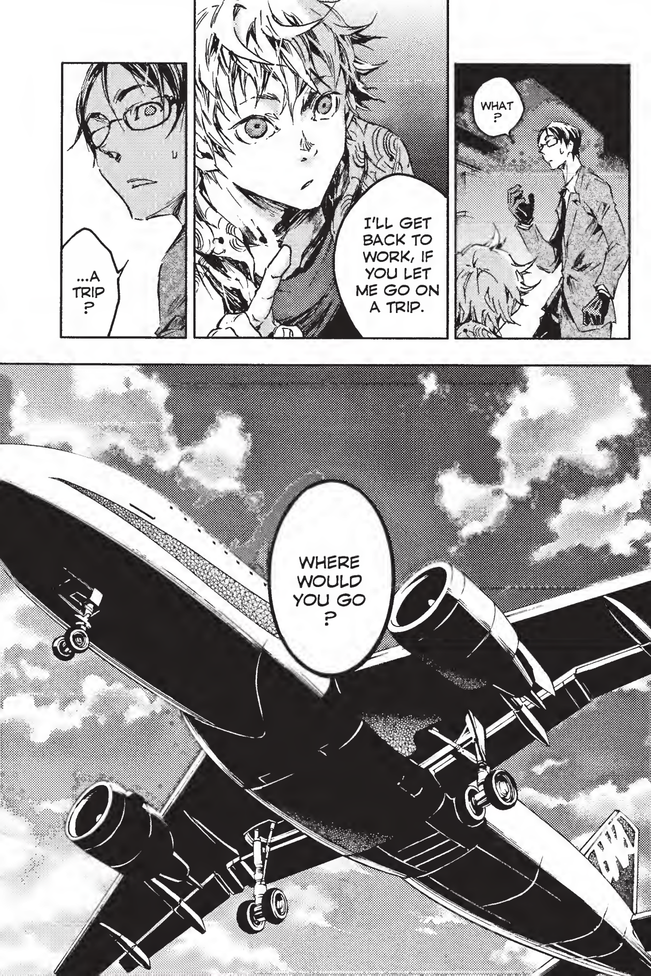

...GOING HOME...
RATTLE

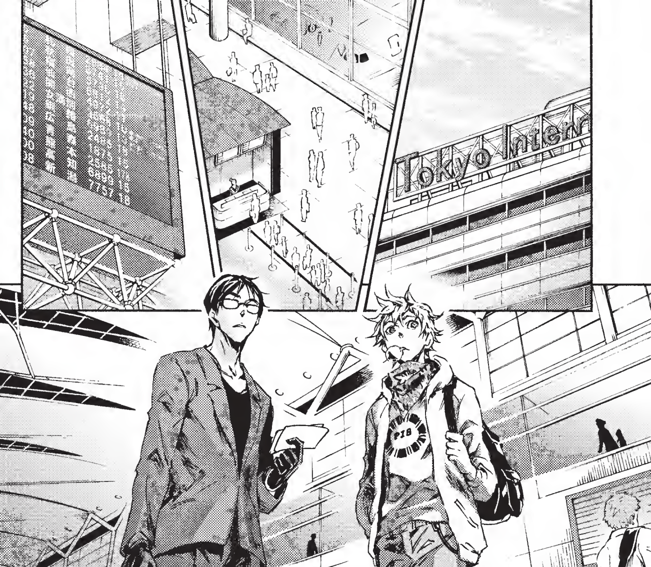

AMANO-KUN!
BAH
WAIT!
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FROM ME?!
WHAT ABOUT OUR JOB?!
I TOLD YOU, WE HAVE TO DO IT TOGETHER!


I'M ON STRIKE!
WHERE ...
...DID YOU LEARN...
DASH
WHAM
...THAT WORD ?!
...PLEASE.
sigh
I CAN'T DO MY JOB WITHOUT YOU.
I CAN'T SEE STAIN-BEASTS.
OR REMOVE PSYCHO-LITHS. I NEED YOU.
PLEASE... PARTNER.


LET'S GO HOME.
...I WON'T MAKE YOU DO IT FOR FREE.
I'LL BUY YOU NEW VIDEO GAMES!
AND NOT JUST GAMES!
I'LL BUY YOU A NEW CONSOLE!!
CLISH


...
...
I KNOW!
HOW ABOUT A BICYCLE?!
I'M TIRED OF SHARING A RIDE, TOO!
YOU'LL GET YOUR OWN BICYCLE!
WE'RE BOTH WORKING HARD!
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH GETTING A FEW BENEFITS!
IN FACT, WE DESERVE IT!!
AND THAT'S WHAT I'LL TELL TOKIEDA-SAN TO CONVINCE...
A TRIP.


WHAT ?
I'LL GET BACK TO WORK, IF YOU LET ME GO ON A TRIP.
...A TRIP ?
WHERE WOULD YOU GO ?


Tokyo Intern
PIB
ANL 877
CLASS
Y
FROM.TO
HANEDA → OKINAWA
51857
TIME
DEPARTS AT 11:36
ADULT ONE-WAY FARE
CONFIRMATION NUMBER
0226
FARE CHARGE (TAX INCLUDED)
¥19800
OU MAY USE SELF CHECK-IN, LOCA
OARDING RESTRICTIONS SUC

From the author

This story uses the concept of a “plan” that determines most of a person's life. How does that compare to reality? The world is overflowing with possibilities, and we have the free will to choose our lives from those myriad options. Yes, that's how it is.

But when compared to the size of the world and its infinite possibilities, human flesh is just too small. Our choices are actually rather limited by little things like where we were born. The options available in a Tokyo suburb are completely different than the ones in a Brazilian slum. Even just in Japan, the child of a businessman has different options than the child of a kabuki actor.

And because we don't really know what options are available to other people, we satisfy ourselves with the limited choices set before us. In that sense, you could say that most of our lives are already decided.

Still, it can feel pretty bad to hear someone say we're free to choose things like what we wear and what we eat each day while so much of our life is set in stone. Maybe the reason people suddenly decide to travel is that they want to fight against that plan.

The same goes for Amano-kun.

Tomohiro Maekawa

From Niigata prefecture.

A writer and producer who writes slice of life stories that take place in supernatural settings. He has a wide range of work, from *Super Kabuki II* with Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, to modern theatre written in collaboration with Yukio Ninagawa.

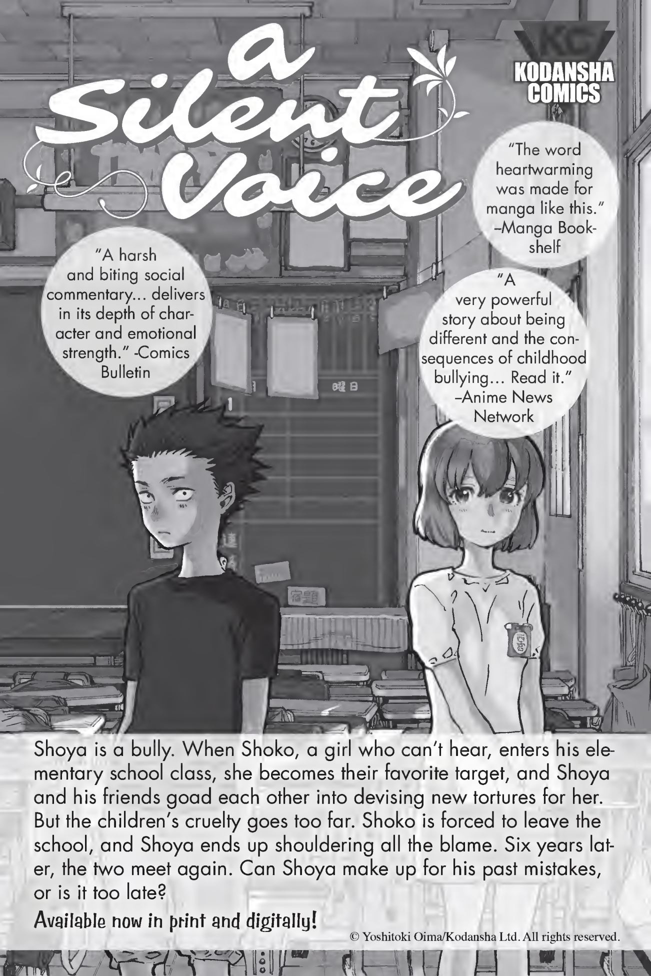
Chairman of the Ikiume theatre troupe, his *Taiyou [The Sun]* won the grand prize in the Yomiuri Drama Awards.

Translation Notes

Sakurai's contacts, page 78
For readers who may be wondering about the order of names on Sakurai's phone, it's in alphabetical order—or more accurately, it's in syllabary order. Because Japanese uses a different writing system, the sounds represented by that system fall in a different order than the alphabet used in English, and so T's come before N's.

Hermit, page 79
More specifically, Sakurai wonders if this Sogabe person is a *sennin*, which is like a hermit, but tends to be more mystical. Even in purely practical terms, a *sennin* is someone who has withdrawn from the outside world, but the word can also refer to an enlightened person, often one who has gained immortality and magical powers.

Posthumous name, page 111
The pillar like object next to the picture of the old woman's late husband displays his *kaimyo*, which can be translated as "posthumous name." Japanese Buddhists, upon their departure from this world, are given a new name to take with them to their next life. The name is often made up of several Chinese characters that each have their own, specific meaning to describe several qualities of the deceased.



a Silent Voice

"The word heartwarming was made for manga like this." –Manga Bookshelf

"A harsh and biting social commentary... delivers in its depth of character and emotional strength." -Comics Bulletin

"A very powerful story about being different and the consequences of childhood bullying… Read it." –Anime News Network

Shoya is a bully. When Shoko, a girl who can't hear, enters his elementary school class, she becomes their favorite target, and Shoya and his friends goad each other into devising new tortures for her. But the children's cruelty goes too far. Shoko is forced to leave the school, and Shoya ends up shouldering all the blame. Six years later, the two meet again. Can Shoya make up for his past mistakes, or is it too late?

Available now in print and digitally!

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KODANSHA COMICS

THE HEROIC LEGEND OF
ARSLAN

READ THE NEW SERIES FROM THE CREATOR OF FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST, HIROMU ARAKAWA! NOW A HIT TV SERIES!

"Arakawa proves to be more than up to the task of adapting Tanaka's fantasy novels and fans of historical or epic fantasy will be quite pleased with the resulting book."
-Anime News Network

ECBATANA IS BURNING!

Arslan is the young and curious prince of Pars who, despite his best efforts doesn't seem to have what it takes to be a proper king like his father. At the age of 14, Arslan goes to his first battle and loses everything as the blood-soaked mist of war gives way to scorching flames, bringing him to face the demise of his once glorious kingdom. However, it is Arslan's destiny to be a ruler, and despite the trials that face him, he must now embark on a journey to reclaim his fallen kingdom.

Available now in print and digitally!

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KODANSHA COMICS

DEVIL SURVIVOR デビルサバイバー

AFTER DEMONS BREAK THROUGH INTO THE HUMAN WORLD, TOKYO MUST BE QUARANTINED. WITHOUT POWER AND STUCK IN A SUPERNATURAL WARZONE, 17-YEAR-OLD KAZUYA HAS ONLY ONE HOPE: HE MUST USE THE *"COMP,"* A DEVICE CREATED BY HIS COUSIN NAOYA CAPABLE OF SUMMONING AND SUBDUING DEMONS, TO DEFEAT THE INVADERS AND TAKE BACK THE CITY.

BASED ON THE POPULAR VIDEO GAME FRANCHISE BY *ATLUS!*

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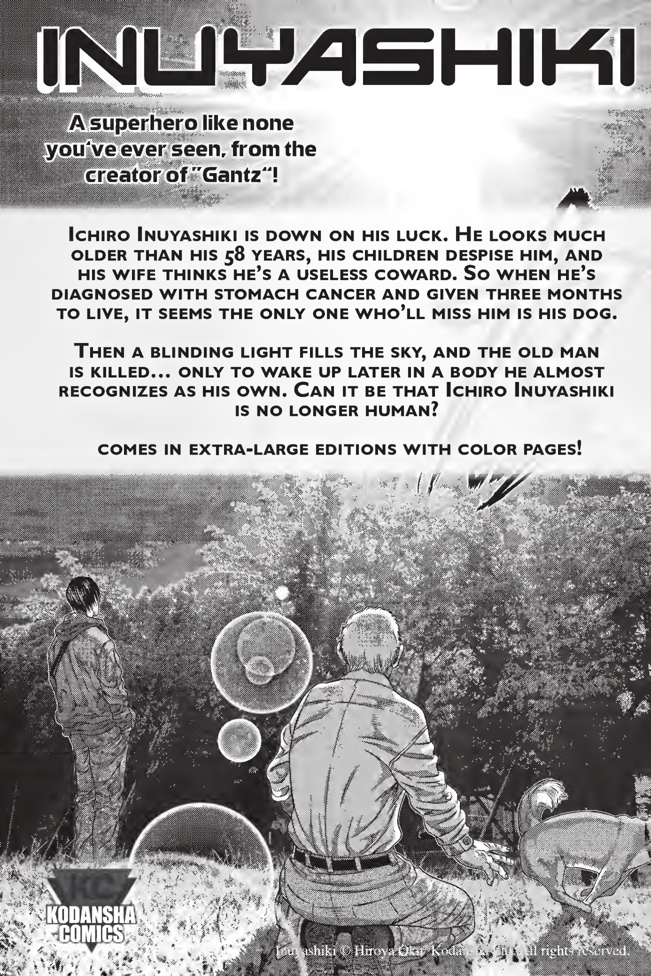

INUYASHIKI

A superhero like none you've ever seen, from the creator of "Gantz"!

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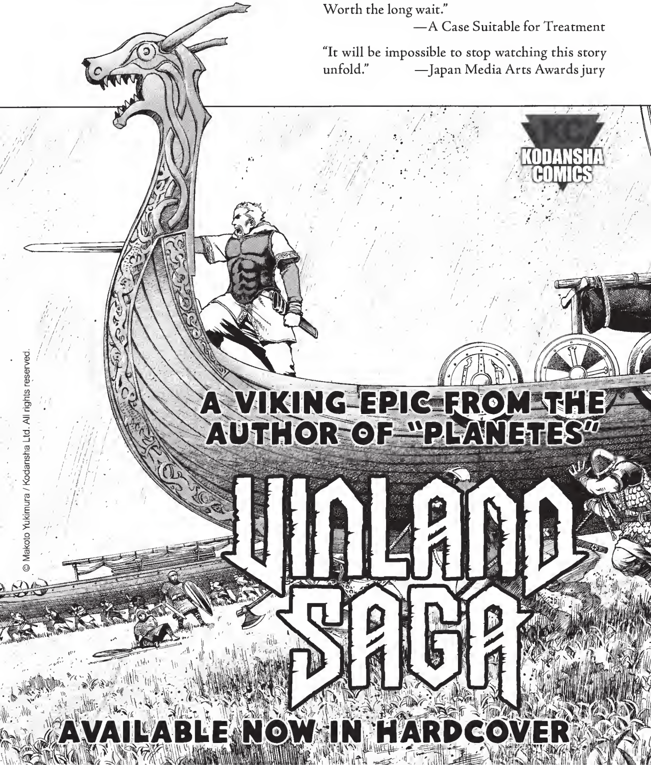
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